

CAN NETANYAHU KEEP THE PEACE?

June 24-July 7, 1996

IN THESE TIMES

REFORMING THE BEAST

Getting campaign financing under control is easier said than done.

Joel Bleifuss reports



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EDITORIAL

CRIME'S BOTTOM LINE

Speaking Sunday morning, on the last day of the Labor Party Advocates convention in Cleveland, June 9, (see "Conventional wisdom," page 26) and wearing a priest-like collarless black shirt, former California Gov. Jerry Brown contrasted the human need for justice and happiness with our political leaders' obsession with "return on investment." If it is not challenged, he said, this basic operating principle of our society will destroy not only the trade union movement, but with it the whole world.

This obsession, of course, is now uncritically accepted in both Washington and the media as the basic determinant of public policy. And in few places is this more obvious—or more obscene—than in the current debate about crime.

Consider, for example, the exchange between economists and sociologists over the cost-effectiveness of prisons and long-term imprisonment. "Can society afford to eliminate crime?" the *New York Times* asked in a June 2 article, and one leading economist replied no. "Society cannot afford a zero crime rate," he said. "We would bankrupt ourselves," and have a "society we wouldn't like."

What the economist meant was that we would bankrupt ourselves building ever-increasing numbers of prisons, and keeping ever-larger numbers of lawbreakers locked up. But even though some \$50 billion a year is now being spent to build and maintain our prison system, this does not mean that we should build fewer prisons. As a Princeton professor of politics and public affairs explained, for every dollar spent to keep a prisoner in jail, "society saves at least \$2.80 in the social costs of crime." According to the "return on investment" logic, then, more prisons are desirable and changes in our social priorities that might reduce the incentives for crime remain outside the realm of consideration, or so this suggests.

Of course, there are also proponents of crime prevention. But, they, too, approach the problem as if it were merely a question of the bottom line. One study, which measures the

cost-effectiveness of prevention versus prison, examined the success of Head Start and various other programs aimed at training parents, keeping high-risk juveniles in high school and counseling 12- and 13-year-old delinquents. The study concluded that these programs would be two to three times cheaper than keeping young offenders in prison. Another study suggests that for each high-risk youth prevented from becoming a "career criminal," society saves \$1.5 million to \$2 million.

Both sides can play this numbers game, but it favors the hard-liners. By treating both the offenders and their victims as statistics in a game of economics, society is reduced to an abstraction in which human beings become objects to be manipulated for the benefit of our corporate elite. This works well for those who view public policy simply as a search for the greatest return on investment, but it leaves

the larger questions of social needs and desires out of the equation. And since those who create statistics to prove the benefits of prevention do so because they have a soft spot for human needs and desires, they are put on the defensive.

Wouldn't it be better to talk directly about the kind of society we want? Shouldn't public policy-makers address themselves for once to the social causes of crime and to the

needs of people who are forced to live in decaying neighborhoods where the odds of living comfortable, productive lives are getting worse every year? Neither conservatives nor mainstream liberals will adopt this approach. But shouldn't the left be more assertive in defense of human values?

It may seem ironic to some on the left that a Jesuit-trained Catholic politician like Jerry Brown is the one to cut through to the underlying question of values, as he did in his Cleveland speech. But it is a fact

Public policy advocates should pay more attention to the social causes of crime—and the rights of all to live comfortable, productive lives.

that Vatican II Catholics, and especially the Jesuits, have taken the lead in articulating humane social values, not only in Central and South America, where liberation theology has inspired millions of people, but also here in the United States. Now it's time for the left, and especially its new political formations, to join in by articulating and promoting its own worldview.

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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InTHESE TIMES

CONTENTS

Volume 20, Number 16

Taming the beast

Consensus on the best strategy for reforming campaign finance laws proves elusive.

JOEL BLEIFUSS
12

A hawk's progress

Will new Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu doom the Middle East peace process?

BENNY MORRIS
16

Labor pains

Can the newborn Labor Party win mainstream union support?

JAMES WEINSTEIN
26

FEATURES

- Hong Kong under the gun • Dave Lindorff20
 African politics and American policy • Salim Muwakkil24
 Viewpoint: Plessy vs. Ferguson's centennial • Jamin Raskin28

REVIEWS

- Film: *Someone Else's America* • Pat Dowell30
 In Print: *Mickey Mouse History* • Chris Rasmussen32
 Speed Read: *Raised By Wolves* • Jeffrey L. Perlah35

DEPARTMENTS

- Letters4
 Sylvia • Nicole Hollander4
 In Short6
 Appall-O-Meter • David Futrelle7
 Media Watch • Thomas Goetz9
 Tomorrow's news • Steve Brodner9
 Huge Mouth • Peter Hannan11
 Classifieds37

LETTERS

Lift the curtain

"The Dianna files" (May 27) briefly describes the difficult path trod by Sr. Dianna Ortiz since her torture in Guatemala in 1989. Given the most likely case, that the person in charge of her torturers was associated with the U.S. government (and probably a U.S. citizen as well), the search for truth is not going to get much easier in the near future.

The U.S. government, regardless of which political party is in control, will do whatever it can to hide any complicity in torture. This is not surprising—nor is it surprising that the government will be aided by sycophantic reporters. There's not too much we can do about this.

The one thing we can control is what we do ourselves—and what we must do is act. June 19 is a National Day of Action. We want all government information on human rights abuses in Guatemala since 1954

declassified by executive order (which has already been done for other countries). We want the full report of the Intelligence Oversight Board released—not just a summary—and we want it released by June 30. We want that report to be thorough. After all, they've been at it since March 30, 1995.

We need to do whatever we can to make the cost of continued government secrecy so high that, finally, the curtain will be lifted. The cost to us will be high as well, but—whatever it may be—it is unlikely that it will be as high as that which Sr. Dianna has already paid.

Harold A. Nelson
Edinburg, Texas

Democracy

Rick Perlstein's "Moby Dick Morris; or, The Wedge" (May 27) underlined the fishy uses of polls to divert the public's attention away from real

issues and into a sea of wedge issues.

Wedge politics is a danger to democracy because it caters to the "center" of an increasingly tiny and wealthy electorate, which drives increasing numbers of less affluent voters from politics. This tactic is not lost on the wealthy and powerful. The corporate media support these tactics by insisting that politicians are seeking a valid center in wedge issues.

Elections are valid only when important issues are addressed. Without valid elections, we end up with democracy in form only. In the last presidential election, only 38 percent of eligible voters identified sufficiently with the issues to participate. Real issues are being addressed less and less. The wishes of the huge majority of the people, such as universal health care, clean air and water, an end to poverty, and a peaceful world, are simply being ignored.

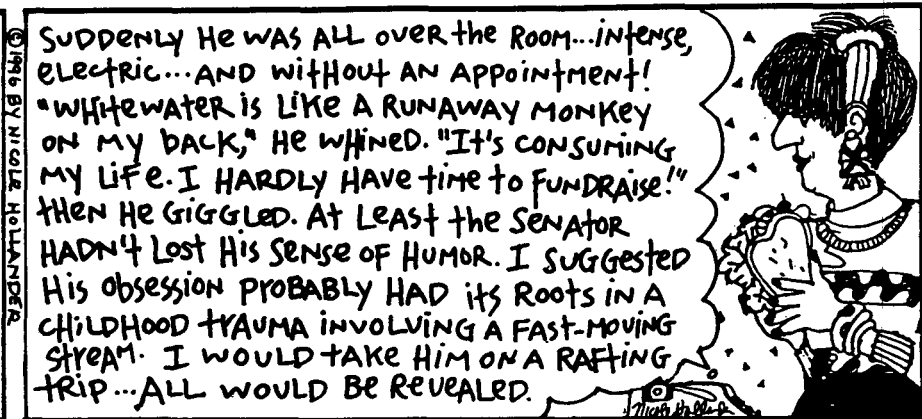
Bette Hurst
Damascus, Md.

Faux polls

I applaud Rick Perlstein's "Moby Dick Morris; or, The Wedge." The "Platform Poll" the Democratic National Committee (DNC) is currently sending to potential contributors is an embarrassment to all Democrats. I have received three copies—perhaps because I made a small contribution early in the year. Each time I have been sucked in. I should make my views known, I have said, and each time I

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander





have realized after struggling for a while that the questionnaire is not intended to elicit my opinions. I'm just supposed to endorse the platform and send more money. I understand the need that prompts this strategy, but I am irritated by having my opinions trivialized this way.

There are real issues between Democrats and Republicans, as Perlstein suggests: corporate responsibility, economic inequality, defense spending, and so on. No poll is likely to get at such issues with any subtlety, but this poll is transparently unconcerned with my opinions. The DNC would get more from me by a simple, honest request for more money.

Bela O. Baker
Luxemburg, Wis.

Required reading

I wish everyone concerned with education would have to read Gerald Graff's "Is progressive education growing up?" (May 27). Much of the freshmen year at college, along with all the remedial courses some students take, could be eliminated if high schools fostered intellectual achievement as much as they do athletics.

I owe my career as an academic in large measure to the academic atmosphere in my high school, and to several teachers who held high expectations for the intellectual achievements of their students. My history teacher got us to pass the state examinations, and still managed to teach history as a series of arguments, which we had to decide upon and debate. This teacher

preceded Graff by more than a generation. I hope such attitudes toward teaching are not as rare now as they were half a century ago!

Laurence G. Wolf
Cincinnati

The end of responsibility

Fred Block may be a good sociologist, but he doesn't seem to understand that "corporate responsibility" is an oxymoron. (See "Toward real corporate responsibility," May 27.)

A company becomes a corporation to escape responsibility. The English advertise this by calling corporations "limited"—meaning limited liability. The only way toward real corporate responsibility is to eliminate incorporation. Company structure can do all the necessary functions of corporations without limiting liability.

Block's viewpoint is too limited. I would not be surprised to find that he is incorporated.

Marvin Lewis
Philadelphia

Welfare reform

The "In Short" section of the May 13 issue contained an article entitled "Welfare as we know it." According to this piece, *In These Times* agrees with the conservatives. I don't detect any criticism of so-called "welfare reform" here. So, according to the general public—as if that ought to be the criteria for any thinking, feeling human being—welfare would be fine if

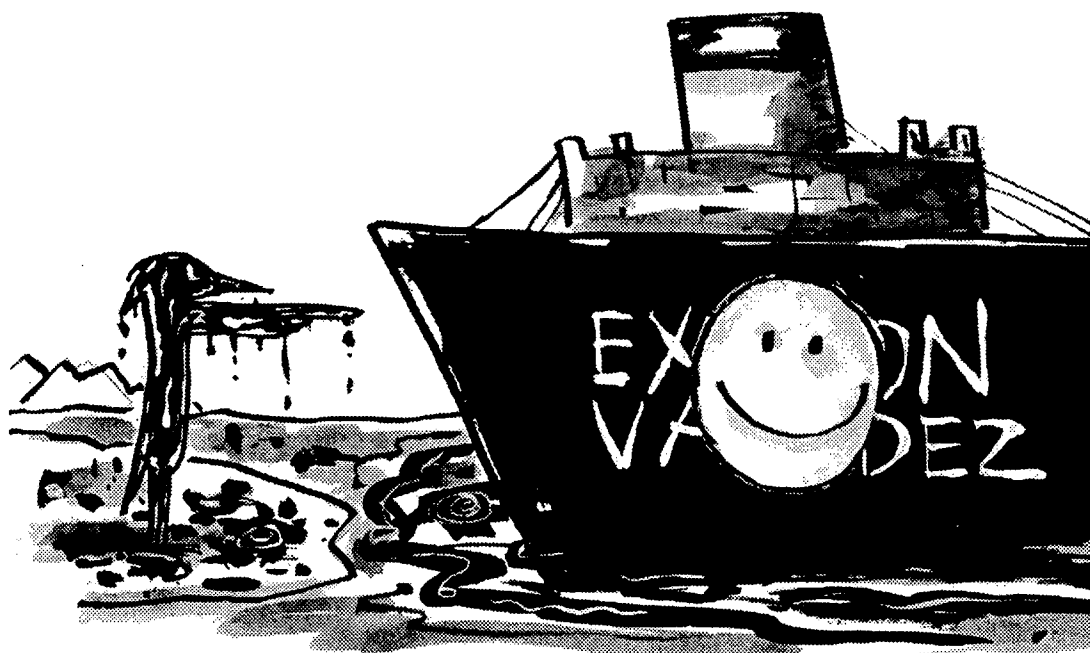
recipients went out to rake leaves or clean roads rather than nurture their own children. Since when is it a "benefit" to support the nurturing of children? Any other advanced country provides this service to parents.

If "most Americans" believe that the children of economically challenged Americans ought to be carted off to government institutions while their mothers "work" (as if child care consists of lazing around) or "go to school"—and supposedly progressive publications concur with this unenlightened position, then I tremble to ponder what the conservative position is.

Mary Bronstein Cantoral
Warrenville, Ill.

Editor's note: We have criticized the Republican and White House versions of welfare reform extensively in past issues. The one thing we agree on is that welfare as we have known it is a failure. Politically, it is designed to create tensions between working people and the unemployed or others in need of assistance. For recipients, it is degrading, inadequate and often a dead end. We favor a social wage, available to all, that would include quality child care, quality schooling, universal medical care and real job training for real jobs. This would be available to all people below a comfortable income level, and would be paid for by taxes on those with incomes above what is now considered middle class.

InSHORT



SEA DOGS

The last most people heard of the *Exxon Valdez* was a sly joke in the movie *Waterworld*, where the infamous vessel had become a rusty pirate ship captained by one-eyed Dennis Hopper and rowed by hundreds of sweaty brutes in leather. The *Exxon Valdez* was, of course, the tanker that spilled almost 11 million gallons of oil into Prince William Sound, Alaska, in 1989. After the disaster, the ship was anchored and cleaned in a nearby bay and then towed for repairs to a shipyard in California. Prohibited from returning to the more lucrative Alaskan market by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, the boat was renamed the *SeaRiver Mediterranean* and now ferries oil between the Middle East and Europe. But SeaRiver Maritime, the

subsidiary of Exxon that owns the tanker, recently filed a pair of lawsuits against the federal government, asking one court to overturn the Alaskan ban and another to require the government to reimburse the company for the money that the tanker has lost because of that prohibition.

The former *Exxon Valdez* was

specifically designed for hauling crude oil from the Valdez terminal to West Coast ports. Since the 1990 ban, the tanker has operated in Europe, where it probably now earns \$25,000 a day, according to Duncan Hobbs, a shipping analyst in London. But the boat costs about \$20,000 a day to operate; while it makes some daily profits, it's hardly enough to pay off the original building costs of \$100 million. Meanwhile, a sister ship, the *SeaRiver Long Beach*, still carries oil from Alaska to the West Coast for an estimated \$45,000 a day.

But what makes the *SeaRiver Mediterranean* case interesting—apart from the possibility of the vessel returning to Alaskan waters—is the company's deployment of the "takings" argument, a favorite weapon of the Wise Use movement against environmental laws. The Fifth Amendment requires the federal government to compensate people

for the "taking" of their property, a rule that obviously applies in cases of eminent domain, when the government procures land for highways or parks. But conservatives now argue that "takings" should apply even when the government hasn't taken any real property, only reduced potential earnings such as the lost rev-

Primary colors

GREEN PARTIES, WHICH HAVE PROLIFERATED AROUND THE WORLD, CAME BY their name, not because of any ecological connotation, but by a process of elimination. In Germany, where the original Green Party was founded in 1979, Green was the only hue left on the political color spectrum. Red is the color of the Social Democrats, black the color of the Christian Democrats and blue belongs to the Christian Socialists. Yellow was not an option because of its unfortunate association with World War II. Purple has a papal problem. And Orange is a bit too Protestant. Which left Green. —Joel Bleifuss

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APPALL-O-METER

THE IN THESE TIMES INDEX OF INDECENCIES



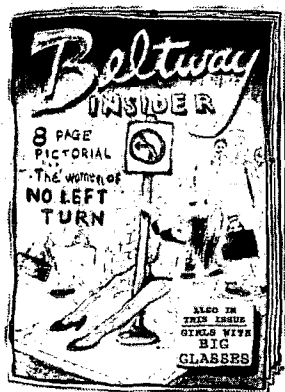
Success appeal 7.5

If you've been wondering why there have been so many news stories about sweatshops in the last couple of months, there's a simple answer: jealousy. Executives at Wal-Mart are convinced the recent attacks on sweatshops are really an attempt to get back at the company for being so darn successful, the Reuters news service reports. "Any time a company or individual is successful, there is a small number of people out there who are determined to bring you down," Wal-Mart spokesman Jay Allen explained.

Striking out 4.4

In *Making It*, his legendary memoir from the '60s, Norman Podhoretz wrote about his discovery that "it was better to be rich than to be poor." Now young John Podhoretz, Norman's son, has made the discovery that it is better to be good-looking than bad. Trouble is, he's not as happy with this discovery as his dad was with his. In

a May 27 *Weekly Standard* piece titled "Dole, The GOP, and the Genetically Endowed," Podhoretz waxes indignant about right-wing beauties "sporting Rachel-



from-Friends hair" who've hitched their well-shaped stars to the conservative revolution. "As nature's winners," Podhoretz complains, "they think it is their birthright to be winners at the political level as well." He focuses particularly on one (unnamed) group of "[t]wo dozen remarkably attractive conservative Republican women who cover the right-wing waterfront" as lobbyists and other inside-the-Belt-

way bandits. Trouble is, as the World Wide Web-based political gossip column "The Buzz" notes, the women Podhoretz was evidently writing about—members of a group called No Left Turn—aren't exactly happy about his characterization of them. "If this is his sweet way of asking all of us for a date," one of the women told "The Buzz," "it has failed as have his direct attempts in the past."

Fly girl 6.2

Do you want to make your child's life more like that of Jessica Dubroff, the 7-year-old pilot who died in April after her single-engine plane crashed immediately after taking off in a rainstorm? If so, help may be on the way: Lisa Blair Hathaway, Jessica's defiantly unapologetic mother, is writing a book on how to raise children. "I was calling it "Noble Parenting," until I discovered there's nothing noble about parenting," she told *Esquire*. "Then I was calling it "Eradicating Parenting," and I found that very conflicting." Now, she says, she's going to call the book "Individual Peace"—an oddly narcissistic title, given that parenthood really isn't a matter of individual anything.

the results of their disaster," he says. The company has even attempted to write off the damage settlement on its taxes by describing the oil spill as a routine cost of doing business. So far, though, that's an argument SeaRiver has not yet made to persuade the courts and the public that the old *Exxon Valdez* deserves to ride again on Prince William Sound.

—Will Nixon

CLEANING HOUSE

In Michael Jordan's Chicago, the game of basketball has become a civic religion. So it's not surprising that even a long-retired player from the Los Angeles Lakers has been drawing sizable crowds during his tours through the impoverished projects of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). But CHA residents haven't come to hear former Laker Ron Carter talk about his career on the court. Rather they're interested in learning about the role he played in pioneering innovative job-placement programs for L.A.'s public housing residents.

Carter, who's now working as the CHA's economic development director, has found employment for 500 residents over the last six months and promises to place 1,000 more in jobs by the end of the summer. Carter's effort is a key part of the ongoing attempt to reform the CHA, which was widely regarded as the nation's worst public housing agency when the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) took it over from local officials a little more than a year ago.

The takeover was led by Carter's former boss in Los Angeles, Joseph Shuldiner, then HUD's assistant secretary for public and Indian housing. When he couldn't find anyone else willing to take the CHA's executive director position, he resigned his post in Washington and took the job himself.

For years the CHA's abysmal reputation—as a poorly managed, if not corrupt, provider of racially segregated

venues of the old *Exxon Valdez*.

The government has countered by arguing that Exxon settled its claims in their \$1 billion agreement in 1991. In Alaska, the news that the *Exxon Valdez* may return under any name has touched a raw nerve, says Kevin Harun, director of the Alaska Center for the Environment. He believes that the pipeline and the port navigation system in Valdez remain "accidents waiting to happen." If the *Exxon*

Valdez could return as a double-hulled tanker, a much safer boat, he would accept it as an improvement on the current fleet. But retrofitting a tanker with two hulls is tremendously expensive, and the *SeaRiver Mediterranean* won't be adding a hull anytime soon.

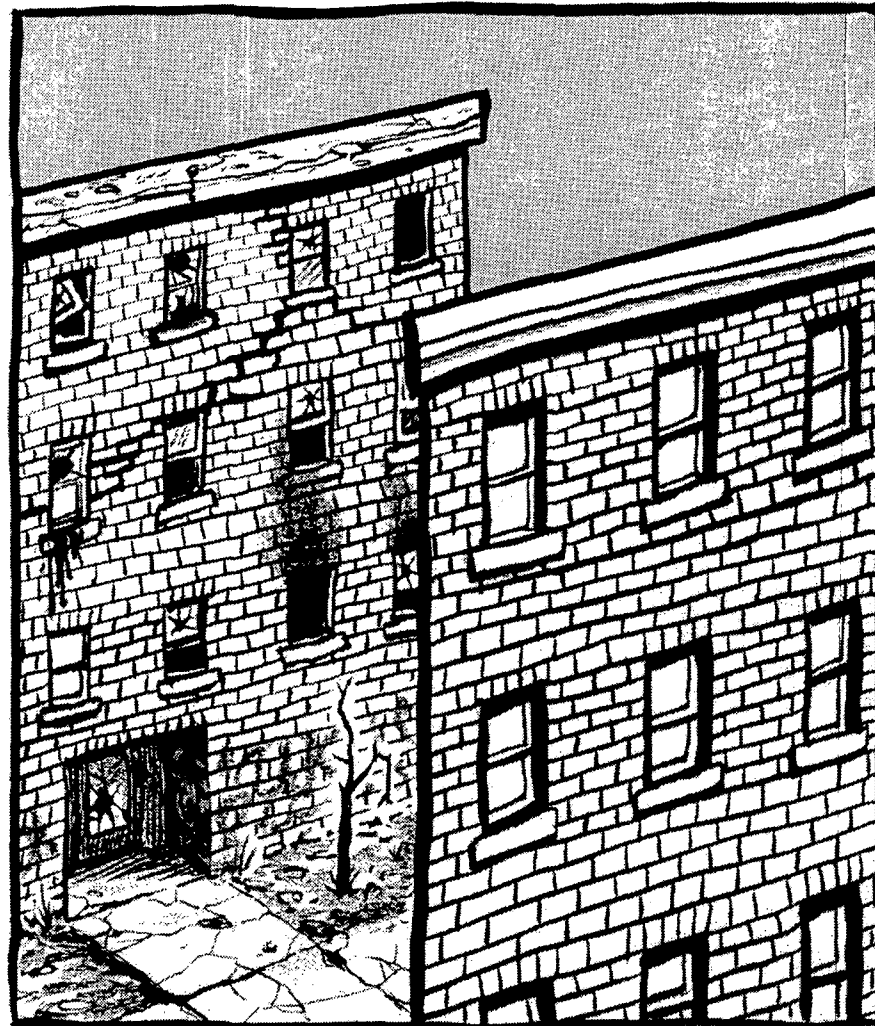
As for SeaRiver's lawsuit to collect the tanker's lost earnings from the government, Harun isn't surprised. "Every time you turn around, Exxon is looking for someone to reimburse them for

housing—has been a blight on public housing's image across the country. (See "Bleak house," June 26, 1995.) But now some observers are cautiously optimistic that Shuldiner and the many industry veterans he's brought with him are beginning to make a difference.

In April, the authority opened a state-of-the-art customer service hot line that the previous administration had been planning for years but was never able to bring on line. And the CHA's notoriously inept finance department (the authority's previous pension fund manager lost \$13 million in bogus investments) has been brought under control.

Still, Shuldiner has his critics. During monthly meetings with CHA resident leaders, he faces a barrage of complaints at the open-mike session that follows. Local politicians and the press have also begun complaining that ambitious redevelopment plans at four CHA projects are proceeding more slowly—or along different lines—than they had hoped. And Shuldiner, a Bronx native, hasn't exactly gone out of his way to ingratiate himself with Chicago pols. "I always describe myself as a liberal New York Democrat," Shuldiner says.

But Shuldiner is no doctrinaire New Dealer. Though he claims to "like big government spending and all that stuff," Shuldiner doesn't hesitate to blast the federal rules that he thinks "have screwed up public housing." Shuldiner particularly disliked the old one-for-one replacement rule, which



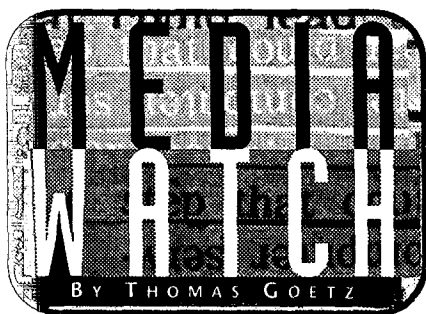
prevented cash-strapped housing authorities from demolishing old units until they replaced them with new ones. (Congress suspended the rule last year and is expected to abolish it by the fall.)

But some fear that simply abolishing the rule—without ensuring that some reasonable amount of replacement housing is constructed—could be disastrous. "Of course, a lot of the stuff in Chicago is bad housing," says Bill Wilen, an attorney with the Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago who works with CHA residents. "But if you demolish it, what do you do with the people who live there? Where do they go?" Despite the CHA's problems, 33,000 people are still on the authority's waiting list for public housing and 47,000 in the Chicago area are waiting for Section 8 assistance, which subsidizes rent in private apartments. "Unless you want greater homelessness and increased crime," says Wilen, "that just won't work."

—Jim McNeill

Color-coordinated

MARY CAL HOLLIS, A SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER FROM BOULDER, COLO., is the Socialist Party's official nominee for president. But she is running as both a green and a red—depending on the state. In New Mexico, she was green. Earlier this month the New Mexico Green Party, in its first election cycle as a legally designated "major" political party, held its first contested primary. (The party has 5,012 registered members.) Going into the primary Hollis had high hopes. In a pre-primary news release, she said: "The enthusiasm for my campaign for affirmative action, gay and lesbian rights, real campaign reform, peace and environmental action has been overwhelming. The fact that I may beat Ralph Nader on Tuesday is the best-kept secret in New Mexico." But it was not to be. Nader, the un-candidate, triumphed with 948 votes to Hollis' 391. —J.B.



Squeaky wheels

Liberal bias in the media, like furloughed convicts or welfare queens, is a regular subject of conservative lamentation. "The press does not lean our way," Bob Dole complained when he resigned from the Senate last month. "This is character assassination ... by the liberal media and a few people in Washington, D.C., rubbed the wrong way," said Oregon Rep. Wes Cooley days later, defending his own dubious record from press criticism. (Cooley may suffer from more than liberal bias: He apparently has lied about serving in the Korean War, his marriage and his membership in Phi Beta Kappa.)

Some on the right are doing more than complain. Earlier this month the Media Research Center (MRC) announced its "Media Reality Check '96," a \$2.8 million campaign to root out liberal bias and make the airwaves safe for conservatives once again.

Based in Washington, D.C., the belly of the liberal beast, MRC is a quasi-think tank that makes Accuracy in Media's Reed Irvine look like a fact-checker for *The Nation*. Headed by Brent L. Bozell III, a vociferous opponent of public broadcasting and occasional guest host for Rush Limbaugh, the MRC has rooted out supposed examples of bias incidents on shows from Dan Rather's *CBS News* to *Friends*. But where Bozell's anti-media grudges were once received as the far-fetched ravings of the looney right, they have recently acquired some credibility as the result of a Freedom Forum survey, in which 89 percent of Washington reporters said they voted for Clinton in 1992. The proof of bias

never seemed so certain, and Bozell's siren call is gaining newfound legitimacy—in recent weeks MRC propaganda has already found its way into the media it would otherwise condemn, inspiring an influential story in the *Wall Street Journal* and informing prominent columns in the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*.

The squeaky wheel gets the grease, and whining like Bozell's prompts newspaper publishers and television news vice presidents to warn their campaign reporters to play it safe and make sure to provide the "conservative viewpoint"—where groups like the MRC and the Heritage Foundation are only too happy to lead them. The only problem is, issue coverage is already framed almost entirely in the idiom of business and its loyal executive class. Witness the serious and largely positive play the flat-tax imbecility received during the primaries, or the various earnest discussions about

the best means by which welfare might be demolished. It's hardly an exaggeration to say that voices of real opposition are almost never heard.

Or take a recent episode of the *Charlie Rose Show* (broadcast by Bozell's archenemy, PBS). Guest-hosting the May 28 show on Whitewater was media mogul and GOP booster Mort Zuckerman. On Zuckerman's right, representing the conservative point of view, was the *Wall Street Journal's* John Fund. Representing the "left" was Brian Duffy, a reporter for *US News and World Report*—a magazine that is owned by none other than Mort Zuckerman. You couldn't ask for a better illustration of the way today's media actually works: No matter what Duffy actually believes or wants to say, does anybody expect him to cross his boss on national TV? *U.S. News*, by the way, is the one newsmagazine that actually meets the MRC's standards for journalistic fairness.

TOMORROW'S NEWS TONIGHT

By Steve Brodner



Dole ghoster Mark Helprin, following "sympathy strategy," hits on campaign slogan.

MANAGED WINDFALL

Despite growing public outrage over horror stories of patients suffering at the hands of cost-cutting HMOs, state lawmakers across the country continue to support legislation that will open up more of the nation's health care system to the predations of the managed care industry. One of the more controversial targets for legislative action is workers' compensation, the state-regulated insurance system that covers the treatment of occupational injuries and diseases and compensates for lost wages.

With employers paying more than \$60 billion a year for traditional workers' comp insurance, the introduction of managed care policies to this market promises to create a "bonanza for the comp insurance industry," according to *Business Week*. In their push for managed care, insurers are lobbying lawmakers in New York, Illinois and other states to abolish or restrict existing workers' comp laws that guarantee injured workers the right to choose their own doctor. States originally enacted these laws to protect injured workers from "company" doctors, who were—and still are—notorious



for sending injured employees back to work prematurely, with little more than a few bandages and a short supply of pills. Managed care workers' comp policies, by contrast, essentially eliminate employee choice and limit workers to a network of doctors approved by insurance companies.

Only doctors can assess the severity of an injury, and these "impairment ratings" determine how much compen-

sation workers are eligible to receive. With their emphasis on cost-cutting, managed care networks will create an incentive for doctors to understate the degree of disability. Moreover, critics charge, when disputes arise over injuries that require a doctor to determine whether the injuries are "work-related," doctors will be more likely to side with employers and insurers. "Workers' comp doctors must be advocates for injured and sick workers, willing to testify at hearings over disputed claims," says Jim Young of the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health, a coalition of labor unions and health and safety professionals. Managed care, Young argues,

introduces a fundamental conflict of interest into the workers' comp claim process.

The American Insurance Association argues that amending workers' comp legislation makes businesses "more competitive" and "creates jobs." But so far, only the insurance industry—which stands to make \$4 billion in workers' comp profits this year—seems to have benefited from the new legislation. In 1993, the Connecticut legislature "reformed" the state's workers' compensation system by cutting statutory benefit levels, but insurance rates for employers in Connecticut have not significantly declined. Meanwhile, profit margins on workers' comp policies jumped from 6 percent in 1992 to 32.2 percent in 1994, while workers have seen benefits cut by as much as 40 percent. And a report to the Florida legislature, which recently implemented a managed care pilot program, revealed that while the "plan was especially effective in cutting costs," there was "significantly less patient satisfaction."

As managed care becomes more prominent in the nation's health care system, some elected officials are finding it increasingly difficult to ignore

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Going for the green

THE RACE FOR NEW MEXICO'S U.S. SENATE SEAT WAS MORE HOTLY CONTESTED. Candidate Abraham Gutmann, a founder of the New Mexico Green Party, won the right to try to unseat the current Republican senator, Pete Domenici. Gutmann, a 42-year-old clothing wholesaler, was endorsed by both Albuquerque dailies. "God Bless the Greens," said the *Albuquerque Tribune*, in its endorsement of Gutmann. "Passionate, idealistic, they are trying to forge a new political perspective that combines the conservative impulse toward decentralization and thrift with left-liberal concerns for social justice, the environment, non-violence and more. It's not easy work, and it's well worth encouraging." With 933 votes Gutmann defeated Sam Hitt, who has made some enemies as the director of the environmental group Forest Guardians. Last year, Hitt was hung in effigy by Indian villagers who were protesting his support of a lawsuit that restricted home-use wood gathering on Carson National Forest. Attending the hanging was Roberto Mondragón, the Green Party's 1994 gubernatorial candidate, who garnered 11 percent of the statewide vote. —J.B.

the growing opposition. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, state lawmakers have introduced more than 400 bills this year that would curb a wide variety of managed-care excesses. One notable success has been the banning of "drive-through" maternity care—a managed-care approach that forces hospitals to release mothers within 48 hours of giving birth—in 18 states including New York and New Jersey. But these changes are simply modifications of an inherently flawed system. The real problem still remains a health care system dominated by a private insurance industry that puts profits before patient welfare.

—Ron Bigler

CYBERGOONS

“What kind of people report their organization for illegally copying software? The answer: anyone.” So runs an advertisement in the May 28 issue of *PC Magazine* for the Software Publishers Association (SPA), a Washington-based lobbying group. The ad also lists a toll-free number for readers who want to rat on their colleagues. The association has pressured the government to conduct raids on schools and offices that leave computer facilities unguarded and fail to monitor their use.

Although these raids have succeeded in winning cash settlements—most recently an out-of-court settlement of \$135,000 from the International Fine Arts College in Florida—they have yet to produce a criminal conviction. In 1994, federal prosecutors filed wire-fraud charges against David LaMacchia, a 20-year-old undergraduate at MIT, after investigators discovered that users of his electronic bulletin board service (BBS) were anonymously posting and downloading commercial software. A federal district court threw out charges, however, ruling that the government had improperly resorted to the wire-fraud statute as a copyright enforcement tool.

Last year, President Clinton hired ex-congressional staff member and

SPA member Bruce Lehman to oversee a report on intellectual property rights for his Information Infrastructure Task Force. The report, called the Lehman White Paper, recommends, among other things: developing an Internet copyright police; compelling Internet service providers to snoop through customer files to find people who have non-commercial copies of copyrighted work; and, borrowing a technique from the “Just Say No” crowd, indoctrinating schoolchildren with the new copyright rules. The release of this White Paper last fall has led to the introduction of legislation in both the House and Senate.

In the past few months Lehman has traveled to several international conferences, recommending that his White Paper proposals be adopted on a global scale. And the SPA has expanded its surveillance operations to Asia. In May, working on leads supplied by SPA operatives, Hong Kong authori-

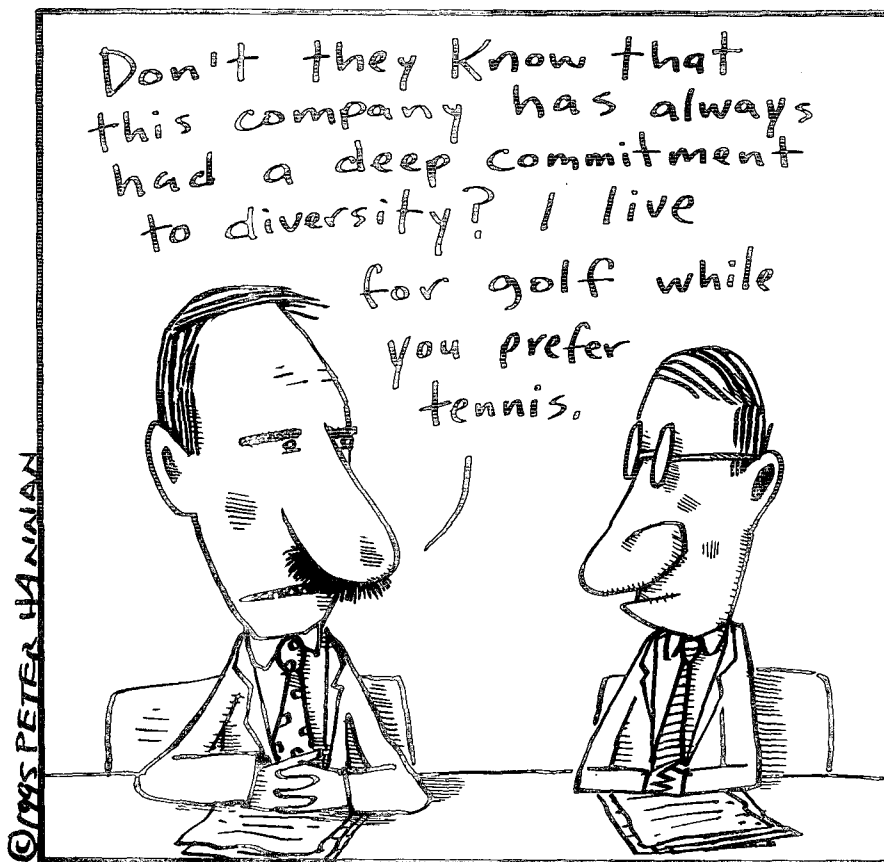
ties arrested two software vendors for possession of 20 non-commercially copied CD-ROMs.

Meanwhile, a bill based on the recommendations of the Lehman White Paper, sponsored in the House by Carlos Moorhead (R-CA) and Pat Schroeder (D-CO) in the Senate, is scheduled to come before the House Judiciary Committee’s Courts and Intellectual Property Subcommittee this month. While Congress had apparently hoped to pass the legislation quickly and quietly, opposition seems to be growing. The Digital Future Coalition, a lobbying group representing phone and electronics companies, as well as various education and consumer organizations, is leading a phone and fax campaign to block the bill. They offer a copy of a suggested letter to fax to your representative at <http://www.ari.net/dfcl>.

—Brian Mier

THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH

By Peter Hannan



THE FIRST STONE

REFORMING THE BEAST

By Joel Bleifuss

Two years ago, David Donnelly was working to elect Rep. Tom Andrews (D-ME) to the U.S. Senate. His job on the campaign was to trace the money that flowed into Republican opponent Olympia Snowe's coffers—donations like the \$175,000 that executives from MBNA, a Delaware-based credit card outfit, bundled together.

"Our opponent was raising big money from companies that had vested interests in who won the election. It became a gut issue for me," Donnelly recalls. Realizing that the ways in which campaigns are funded starkly contradicts the democratic process, Donnelly looked for a job in the campaign finance reform field after his candidate had been defeated. "Lo and behold, the most far-reaching, groundbreaking and historic campaign in the country was happening in my backyard," he says. "So I looked for a job here."

Today Donnelly is the campaign manager for Maine Voters for Clean Elections, a grass-roots group that has put a campaign finance reform proposal on the state's November ballot. The group's hard work has paid off: Their initiative enjoys overwhelming support in Maine, and it has become the standard against which all other reform efforts are judged.

On election day, voters in Maine will be asked: "Do you want Maine to adopt new campaign finance laws and give public funding to candidates for state office who agree to spending limits?" If the Maine Clean Elections Act passes, candidates in the future will be able to choose between two campaign financing options: securing private funding on their own or participating in a new system that would give them public money with certain restrictions.

Those who choose to use private money would see their resources radically curtailed, with individual donor and PAC limits lowered from today's \$5,000 to \$250 for legislative races and \$500 for statewide races. Candidates who opt for public financing would have their campaigns paid for by the state's "Clean Elections Fund," an arrange-

ment for which they must qualify by collecting a certain number of \$5 contributions to be deposited in the fund. They must also agree to forgo private donations and observe a shortened campaign season. Their total campaign budgets would be limited to 75 percent of the average amount spent by the winners in the last election before the law goes into effect on January 1, 2000. However, a publicly financed candidate would be allowed to spend as much as double that amount in the event that a privately funded opponent outspends him.

Support for the proposal has been enthusiastic, with seven of the state's eight daily newspapers endorsing the group's efforts. For many campaign finance reform advocates, the Maine initiative is a

watershed in the effort to get money out of politics. "This is broad, sweeping campaign finance reform by anybody's definition," says Ellen Miller, executive director of the Center for Responsive Politics, the Washington-based group that studies the relationship between money and politics. "If it passes, it will open people's eyes to what is possible."

John Moyers, executive director of the New Jersey-based Florence and John Schumann Foundation, a major funder of campaign finance reform organizations, agrees. "Maine is the future," he says. "We have to figure out how to do Maine everywhere."

Members of the Working Group on Electoral Democracy, an ad hoc organization of campaign finance reform advocates, got the ball rolling three years ago when they hooked up with the Maine Citizens Leadership Fund, a founding member of Donnelly's group. Working with a Schumann Foundation grant, the Leadership Fund adopted a variation of the Working Group's proposal for democratically financed elections in which money for its "Clean Elections Fund" would be raised with a voluntary tax checkoff, cuts in executive and legislative operating budgets, and the \$5 contributions mentioned above rather than taxes. Administrative costs of this new election system would be borne by lobbyists, whose registration fees will double from \$200 to \$400.

"We have found a mechanism that is revenue-neutral for taxpayers—not lobbyists—but for taxpayers," Donnelly says. "And it will resonate with Maine voters." He takes particular pride in the language the campaign has developed to discuss this issue. "Some of the brightest minds in the country have helped develop our message," he boasts.

One of those minds is Working Group member John Bonifaz of the Boston-based National Voting Rights Institute. Bonifaz notes that the Maine initiative, the first ballot proposal to establish full public financing, will "dramatically change the way we think about the financing of public elections." He maintains that the measure will help voters



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reconceptualize electoral democracy. "We have to accept elections as performing a public function that we can't privatize, like public schools and public streets. We as a people need to own this process and we the people need to own it in full."

In addition to leveling the electoral playing field, Donnelly hopes campaign finance reform will also reduce people's outrage and cynicism toward the democratic process. "This campaign is completely focused on reinvigorating citizen participation in political debate as a cornerstone of our democracy," he says. "It is their democracy and they are going to vote to take it back."

It's a message that has resonated across the state. Supporters of the proposal range from the Green Party to the Christian Civic League, Maine's equivalent to the Christian Coalition. The Maine reformers spent a lot of time talking to voters. Moyers, who has closely followed the process from New York, says this inclusiveness has been the key to the group's success. "They invited everybody to the table and kept inviting them back," he says. "They allowed everybody to be in on it and that built a solid foundation of support. They did a good job with the media. They did good research that got good attention and built their credibility."

Donnelly stresses the importance of reform from the ground up. "We began by building a base," he says, "and that culminated on election day this past year when over 1,100 volunteers collected 65,000 signatures in one day to put the initiative on the ballot. Maine will prove to the country that the naysayers who claim that such a strong, comprehensive measure is

politically impossible are dead wrong," says Donnelly.

What's happening in Maine has reverberated across the nation, raising questions elsewhere about the wisdom of the more moderate reforms that have been proposed repeatedly at both the state and national levels. "The issue," Bonifaz now claims, "is whether the traditional leadership of the reform organizations are going to get on the bandwagon and realize that the public is ready for radical change."

Just about everyone agrees that, as John Canham-Clyne, a researcher at Public Citizen and frequent contributor to *In These Times*, puts it, "one of the fundamental problems

in American society is the way money dominates our politics." But, he continues, "there is absolutely no consensus of what is a winning strategy to combat that problem."

Campaign financing remedies that have garnered the most congressional support range from feeble to outright impotent. The traditional reform organizations—Public Citizen, the League of Women Voters and Common Cause—are supporting a campaign finance measure known as the "Bipartisan Clean Congress Act of 1995," sponsored officially by Reps. Linda Smith (R-WA), Christopher Shays (R-CT) and Martin Meehan (D-MA). The "Bipartisan" proposal includes the following measures: the elimination of all PAC contributions; a voluntary spending limit of \$600,000 for House races; rewards for candidates who adhere to this voluntary limit with discounts for postage, radio and television; a requirement that candidates raise 60 percent of their contributions in the state. The bill also caps individual contributions exceeding \$250 to an aggregate limit of no more than 25 percent of the spending limit, tightens reporting requirements on independent expenditures and prohibits the bundling of donations sent through the mail. However, since the ban on all PAC contributions is likely to be overturned as a violation of the First Amendment, the bill contains a fall-back position that would limit PAC contributions to \$1,000, and aggregate PAC contributions to 25 percent of the voluntary spending limit. Then there's the Democratic version of this proposal, which differs from the bipartisan bill only in that it allows contributions from PACs, which, not coincidentally, are the main vehicles through which labor unions contribute to Democratic candidates.

Critics charge that the two bills do nothing to alter the system in which private money—and the strings attached to that money—controls public elections. From Boston, John Bonifaz looks askance at these doings down in Washington. "It's the Washington strategy of get what you can," he says. "And when it is all said and done, it is piecemeal reform. Private wealthy interests will still be able to dominate the campaign financing process."

Rep. David Obey (D-WI) agrees. He is the sponsor of the only bold initiative that has come out of Congress this year, the "Public Interest Campaign Reform Act." On May 8, Obey, who represents a northern district of Wisconsin with a long radical tradition, sent out a "Dear Colleague" letter that is astonishing in its forthright assessment of the problem. It reads, in part:

It is time for campaign finance reform efforts to stop focusing on small issues and take this issue head-on, rather than try to play around the edges by vainly trying to build a voluntary

system which will cause contributors to behave as reformers would like. ... Congress should pass legislation that contains a congressional finding that the existing system of private contributions is a threat to the nation's democratic process. ... The only way to fundamentally change the current system is to take out all private money from financing general elections. ... Elections belong to the public, and they should be financed by all of the people, not just the well-heeled and well-connected. ... The central issue in campaign financing is not whether rich or well-connected people contribute too much collectively through PACs. The issue is whether the rich and well-connected have too much influence on the political system, whether they contribute individually or collectively. They do, and this bill would correct that.

The letter gets better. Anticipating that the Supreme Court will find such a law unconstitutional because it limits the money a person can give to a political campaign—and in the court's view money equals speech—Obey calls for a constitutional amendment. Only then, Obey writes, can legislators "do what needs to be done to prevent the Congress of the United States from becoming an institution populated only by millionaires, or by people who are strongly supported by millionaires."

Obey's missive notwithstanding, members of Congress are hardly likely to vote to change the system, however corrupt, that got them elected. "I am looking past 1996," says Moyers. "What-

ever happens in Washington doesn't really matter." At the Center for Responsive Politics, Miller puts it this way: "All congressional reform is stuck between a rock and a hard place, the only thing that is moving is at the state level."

California is one state where, like Maine, the issue is definitely moving. Whether it's getting anywhere, however, is a different question.

In November, California citizens will have a chance to choose between two reform packages. Californians for Political Reform, an umbrella group that includes Common Cause, the League of Women Voters and United We Stand, is proposing a tepid reform package that would establish a voluntary system of campaign spending caps and limits of \$1,000 for individuals and PACs.

Meanwhile, Californians Against Political Corruption, a coalition that includes the California Public Interest Research Group (CalPIRG), the Service Employees International Union and the Mexican-American Political Association, has put forward a more far-reaching option that would enact \$100 campaign contribution limits (\$200 for statewide races). PACs are banned outright under this proposal but unions and professional associations are allowed to con-

Unless reform-minded people can speak directly to the inherent conflict of interest that occurs when public servants are privately financed, we will never be able to steer the debate to favor real reform.

tribute via newly created Citizen Contribution Committees. Though better than Common Cause's non-reform, these proposals fall short of the standard being set in Maine.

"Did you know there is a war on here?" asks Fernando Igrejas at Californians Against Political Corruption. Hostility between the two groups is running high. On June 6, Californians for Political Reform issued a press release charging Igrejas' group with pursuing "Snake Oil Reform," attacking their rivals' proposal first because it may be overturned in the courts, and second because it abolishes corporate PACs while allowing citizen PACs to flourish.

The issue of \$100 limits like those mandated by the CalPIRG proposal is hotly debated in campaign finance reform circles. "One hundred dollar limits are okay, but how do they challenge the current situation?" wonders Moyers. "I am increasingly convinced that unless reform-minded people can speak directly to the inherent conflict of interest that occurs when public servants are privately financed, we will never be able to change the conversation to favor real reform."

Moyers points to polls done in California, Oregon, Montana and Missouri by the Center for New Democracy, the New Party's public-interest adjunct, which show that the majority of voters would agree to public financing for campaigns if it would limit the influence of special interests.

Miller shares these concerns. As she sees it, the Maine proposal, which includes a voluntary system of public financing that is likely to satisfy the Supreme Court's First Amendment requirements, is forcing reformers to face what she calls "the great Catch-22" of the money and politics debate. "Do you reach for the stars or do you do what is self-defined as politically viable?" she asks. "Everybody has taken that latter road. But the people of Maine reached for the stars to change the political culture and put campaign finance reform within grasp. If it is successful, it will make all the non-believers sit up and take notice."

Others, like Doug Phelps, the chair of U.S. PIRG and a board member of the Center for New Democracy, maintain that the \$100 limit is the way to go. "These guys are all wet," Phelps says of advocates of more radical reform. According to him, the situation in Maine is unique. In other states, he says, its far-reaching proposal would be "a sure loser." "For the past 25 years we have focused on getting public financing legislation through Congress," he says. "It's great in theory, but we have gone to contribution limits because that is something that people can relate to and it is very difficult to attack."

To those who fear that \$100 limits will be struck down by the courts, Phelps responds, "We cannot succeed as progressives by trying to guess what the courts will do, or, worse, getting down on our knees and groveling before the bench. The essence of politics is to shape the law to serve the people. Every great social change in American history was originally damned by the courts—abolition of

slavery, women's suffrage, the 40-hour workweek, health and safety regulations, anti-trust laws, civil rights."

But another critic of \$100 limits, who asked not to be named, worries that the Center for New Democracy is pushing a partial measure that will raise the hopes of voters that they will actually fix something. "I think that what they are doing is going to shoot them in the foot. The \$100 limit will give rise to bundling. It will not take money out of the system. When that money gets bundled together and put in a corporate envelope, that is an exercise in political influence."

Although critical of the \$100 limit strategy, John Bonifaz travels around the country defending \$100 limit cases from legal attack. To his mind, the real impediments to meaningful campaign finance reform are the Supreme Court's 1976 *Buckley vs. Valeo* decision, which holds that mandatory campaign spending limits are unconstitutional—and, oddly enough, the American Civil Liberties Union, which leads the opposition to contribution limits.

The ACLU does not trumpet its involvement in the issue, or make much of the fact that in every state where voters have passed laws setting \$100 limits on campaign donations, it has gone to court to get the laws struck down. These legal battles are not mentioned in ACLU promotional literature, in the group's quarterly report to members or on the ACLU Web page.

The ACLU's official position on campaign finance reform asserts that "Limitations on contributions or expenditures made by individuals or organizations for the purpose of advocating causes or candidates in the public forum impinge directly on freedom of speech and association. Their implementation poses serious dangers to the First Amendment."

Critics consequently charge the ACLU with supporting the idea that rich people have a constitutional right to more speech than poor people. "The ACLU never advertises how they are out there to defend the right of wealthy candidates," says Bonifaz. "It would not be helpful in their fundraising efforts to tell the rank-and-file civil liberties members that one of their main priorities is to squash the rights of non-wealthy voters and candidates all across the country." Bonifaz is confident, however, that the ACLU leadership will eventually respond to growing opposition within the organization and change its tune. (ACLU officials failed to respond to my repeated requests for interviews.)

Up in Maine, the ACLU constitutes the only opposition to the public financing proposal to surface so far. "The Maine ACLU is not for free speech," says Donnelly. "They are for expensive speech. The idea that someone who has enough money can go out to buy a second car, a second house or a larger market share is all well and good. We all kind of agree with that. But the idea that someone is buying an election is different. Citizens have a strong public interest in who can buy influence by affecting the outcome of an election."

MIDDLE EAST

A hawk's progress

*Can new
Israeli Prime
Minister
Benjamin
Netanyahu
reconcile his
party's hard
line with the
Middle East
peace process?*

By Benny Morris
JERUSALEM

Yigal Amir has got what he wanted. His murder of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin last November struck a savage blow against the Middle East peace process and sent a signal to all its enemies that peace was vulnerable, that peace could be killed. Through a campaign that ultimately involved bombing and rocket attacks on civilians—and no small measure of incompetence on the part of Rabin's successor, Shimon Peres—Amir and company have succeeded. Their efforts have yielded up a new prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu of the right-wing Likud Party, elected last month explicitly for his unyielding talk regarding the Palestinians, the Syrians and the Lebanese.

Amir, who last week voted for Netanyahu from his prison cell, had calculated his steps accurately. Reasoning that the popular Rabin—the former Israeli

Defense Forces (IDF) chief of staff and victor of the 1967 Six-Day War—was the only Labor Party leader capable of carrying the nation through the peace process, Amir figured that his elimination would cost Labor more votes than the resulting outrage would gain the party in the upcoming elections. Then, with Likud in power, the peace process would grind to a halt.

Amir is the real winner of the Israeli elections in a more profound sense as well: The May 29 results clearly indicate that a growing number of Israelis share the political-religious fanaticism that inspired his crime. Messianic fundamentalism, long dormant in Judaism, revived and took hold of a number of small religious parties in the aftermath of Israel's victory in the 1967 war. Following the lead of a coterie of rabbis, these parties began to identify the conquest of the West Bank as the first harbinger of the "End of Days." Divine intervention, they believed, had wrought Israel's victory, and many looked forward to the re-establishment of the holy temple on Mount

Moriah in Jerusalem's Old City.

This messianism fueled the expansionist fervor that underlay the settlement drive in the Occupied Territories, and accounted for the eventual growth and radicalization of the religious parties. First to be converted was the National Religious Party (NRP), once a moderately orthodox group aligned with Labor. Gradually breaking with Labor during the '70s, the NRP spawned and then nurtured the Gush Emunim ("Bloc of the Faithful") settlement movement, as well as a host of smaller, even wilder outcroppings, such as the Jewish terrorist underground of the mid-'80s and the currently active "Faithful of the Temple Mount," who seek to demolish the mosque on Mount Moriah.

More recently, Israel's two ultraorthodox parties have evolved into proponents of territorial expansion as well. The young yeshiva student population, the parties' grass-roots constituents, pushed the traditionally non-nationalist Ashkenazi Yahadut HaTorah and the Sephardi Shas Party to the right, dragging along even their older, more dovish, rabbinical leaders. This new militancy has underscored a paradox at the heart of these parties' politics: Although philosophically they are not nationalistic and are either anti-Zionist or non-Zionist (their supporters do not serve in the IDF), they support aggressively expansionist, ultranationalist policies. (The NRP is a little different: Its supporters do serve in the army and have in recent years begun to replace the young kibbutzniks who traditionally manned the country's elite military units.)

The young Yigal Amir was a product of the educational systems of both the ultraorthodox and national religious streams. He spent his childhood in an ultraorthodox elementary school; his youth as a boarder in an NRP yeshiva sec-

ondary school; and his young manhood in the Golani Infantry Brigade and then the NRP-affiliated Bar-Ilan, Israel's only religious university and a hotbed of ultranationalism.

Netanyahu's campaign made conspicuous use of its supporters among the religious parties. Skullcapped NRP youngsters and ultraorthodox yeshiva students flooded intersections with fliers and posters ("Only Netanyahu is good for the Jews") and ferried and chaperoned the aged and sick to the polling stations. The rabbis dubbed Netanyahu's campaign a "Holy War" (sometimes in television interviews they actually used the Muslim term "Jihad," revealing an affinity between Jewish and Muslim fundamentalism) and denounced Peres and the left as cosmopolitan, anti-Jewish "sinners" and "infidels." Voter turnout in the settlements in the territories and in the ultra-orthodox districts in Israel ranged between 90 and 100 percent (as compared with 79 percent for Israeli Jews in general and 77 percent for Israeli Arabs).

Netanyahu's victory was also made possible by the Iranian government, which wished to derail the peace process as keenly as did Amir. Iran apparently calculated that Labor's defeat was essential for its purposes and in the run-up to the elections egged on its Lebanese and Palestinian terrorist proxies—Hezbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad. It occasionally intervened directly as well, sending hired terrorists of its own into Israel. The steep increase in guerrilla and terrorist attacks on targets within Israel and along its northern border that took place before the election, including suicide bombings in downtown Jerusalem and Tel Aviv and the salvos of Katyusha rockets on northern Israeli border settlements, were designed to undermine Peres' campaign for reelection. For many Israelis, getting on a bus or strolling in Tel Aviv's Dizengoff Center soon became tests of courage and of faith in Peres' policies. Netanyahu's campaign strategists exploited the attacks, charging that Peres' peace partner, Yasser Arafat, had encouraged the Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorists—or at the very least had done nothing to restrain them.

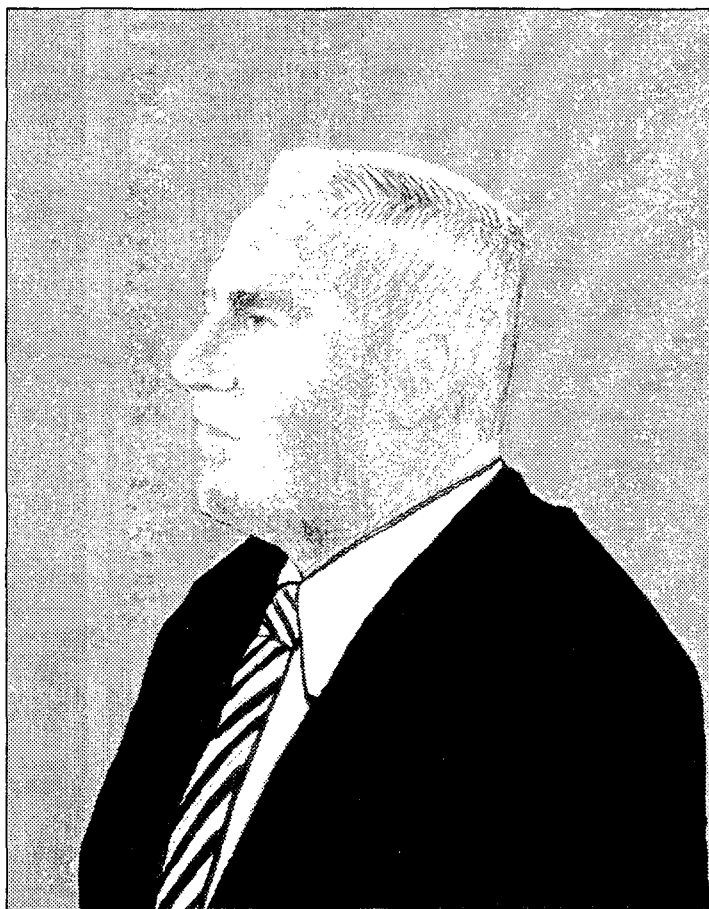
Peres' response to the Hezbollah offensive was the massive Israeli artillery and aerial retaliation that almost inevitably resulted in the misdirected salvo that killed 100 or so civilians in a U.N. outpost at Kfar Qana. The catastrophe cast a pall over the whole campaign and estranged Israel's Arab minority from the government and Peres. Despite a last-minute effort by Arab politicians and Labor Party activists to mobilize the Arab vote, many Arab voters either boycotted the election or cast a blank ballot for the premiership.

Labor made its defeat certain by mounting an uninspired campaign. Following polls taken in the last weeks before the vote that indicated a 3 to 6 percent lead for Peres, Labor campaign managers decided to portray him as an elder statesman, a gentleman above the fray. But the optimistic polls were based on misinformation—the ultraorthodox consistently lied to or refused to cooperate with the pollsters, and many new Russian immigrants and Israeli Arabs apparently told pollsters what they thought the pollsters or the government wanted to hear. The same polls that made the Peres campaign complacent cast Netanyahu as an underdog and propelled Likud loyalists into a burst of activity on election day.

The Labor campaign made almost no use of the Rabin assassination. Nor

did it make any effort to lambaste Netanyahu himself, who is extremely vulnerable to personal attack. His self-confessed philandering should have cost him religious votes; so should the facts that his parents abandoned Israel and moved to the United States when Netanyahu was young; that he himself later in life apparently Americanized his name and toyed with the idea of settling in the United States; and that he lacked experience in high government office. But none of this was exploited by Labor campaign managers.

Netanyahu's rule promises to be a troubled one regardless of whether he sincerely desires peace or not. Not only was his margin of victory a razor-thin 30,000 votes out of some 3 million polled, but since the country's new election system allowed voters to cast two ballots—one for the prime minister and the other for a parliamentary party—



Prime Minister-elect
Benjamin Netanyahu

many voters split their ballots. Likud ended up with only 32 seats in the 120-seat Knesset to the Labor Party's 34 seats (down from 44 in 1992), while the religious parties won an unprecedented 23 seats (10 for Shas, nine for the NRP and four for Yahadut HaTorah). Israel's Soviet immigrants also voted as a bloc, giving their newly founded party, Yisrael Be'Aliya, seven seats.

Likud's parliamentary weakness has forced Netanyahu to haggle with the smaller religious, centrist and right-wing parties in order to set up a viable coalition. To win their support, he will have to promise financial subventions to each (ultraorthodox and immigrant housing, ultraorthodox educational institutions, etc.) as well as changes in the religious-secular status quo (possibly closure of cinemas and certain roads to traffic on the Sabbath).

Netanyahu's chief problem, however, will lie in foreign and defense affairs. The new government inherits a peace process that will be impossible to reverse and also extremely difficult—at least for Netanyahu and his allies—to push forward. It must immediately consider two major problems: The quarantine (*seger*) imposed on the territories by Peres two months before the elections in order to prevent suicide bombers from getting through; and the IDF's scheduled withdrawal from the Arab parts of the West Bank town of Hebron. The quarantine has meant major hardships for the inhabitants of those areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip still under Israeli control and for the Palestinian self-rule areas, whose economy in large measure depends on earnings by workers who commute to Israel. Arafat's administration, aware of Peres' election needs, tacitly accepted the burdensome quarantine for the duration of the campaign. Now that the election is over, Arafat will no doubt demand a reopening of the crossings from the West Bank and Gaza Strip into Israel. How the Netanyahu government, elected on a "greater security" platform, will react remains unclear.

The Hebron conundrum is more challenging still. Hebron, where the Jewish patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are traditionally believed to have been buried, is a city with 160,000 Arab and 3,000 Jewish inhabitants. Fundamentalist religious sentiments are dominant among the Jews and growing stronger among the Arabs. Fearing internal strife, terrorism and revenge attacks during the months before the election, Peres repeatedly postponed the IDF's departure from the town, which, according to the Oslo II agreement, was to have

taken place last March. Netanyahu will now have to decide whether to bow to pressures from within the Likud and the NRP (and perhaps Shas) not to withdraw at all from the holy town—thereby violating an international agreement—or to carry out some sort of withdrawal and incur the ire of his ultranationalist allies. Given the fact that the departure of either the NRP or Shas would topple Likud's prospective parliamentary coalition, withdrawal seems unlikely. But by thus violating the Oslo agreements, Netanyahu will set his new government on a collision course with the Palestinian Authority, the Arab inhabitants of Hebron and, to a lesser degree, the American administration.

But these thorny issues pale in comparison with the dilemmas the new government will face when implementing the next phase of the Oslo process: negotiating the final-stage settlement with the PLO. The talks between Peres and the Palestinian Authority that began, as planned, in early May, will now have to continue, unless Oslo II is to be violated. In the negotiations Israeli and Palestinian leaders are to address their most basic problems, including the future borders between Israel and the Palestinian entity; the exact nature of that entity (an independent state, a province confederated with Jordan, an autonomous zone under Israeli control, etc.); the final status of Jerusalem, a Jewish-Arab city that is Israel's capital and where the Palestinians wish to establish their capital as well; the rehabilitation and resettlement of Palestinian refugees, and so on. Each of these issues poses serious problems for the Netanyahu coalition. Taken together, they confounded the PLO and Peres negotiators who desired earnestly to solve them. How men of less good will will tackle them remains to be seen.

Certainly the omens are not propitious. Immediately after the elections, a number of leading Likud hard-liners, including ex-generals Rafael Eitan and Ariel Sharon, asserted that the new government would have to "renegotiate" the existing Oslo agreements; others declared that Hebron must not be evacuated. The implication was that they viewed the agreements as null and void—though during the election campaign Netanyahu himself declared that he would honor Oslo I and II.

It is extremely unlikely that the PLO would—or could—agree to reopen the Oslo agreements for renegotiation. It is even more unlikely that Netanyahu and his allies, for all their bluster, will tear them up and invade and reconquer the Palestinian Authority self-rule areas. Though possible, such a move would mean a bloody little war (the PLO has some 20,000 lightly armed troops or "policemen," as Israel likes to call them, in the self-governing areas), with an open-ended guerrilla/terrorist war to follow; an almost certain scrapping of the peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan and possible hostilities along all of Israel's borders; and a com-

Continued on page 36

***Netanyahu must either
advance the peace
negotiations, angering
his ultraorthodox
coalition partners,
or stonewall the
procedure, risking
a revival of the intifada.***

STIMULATING READING

Liberalism's Crooked Circle

Letters to Adam Michnik
Ira Katznelson

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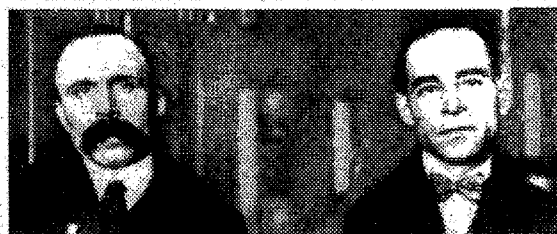
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China syndrome

Residents of Hong Kong look forward with dread to their reunion with the People's Republic.

By Dave Lindorff
HONG KONG

In anticipation of Hong Kong's looming reunion with mainland China, some Chinese cities have erected big electronic countdown clocks to tick away the days, hours and seconds until July 1, 1997, the date Hong Kong reverts to Chinese sovereignty. Visitors crossing by mass-transit rail from Lo Wu, in Hong Kong's New Territories, into Shenzhen, the anything-goes special economic zone across the border in the People's Republic, pass one such billboard.

For China's leaders, these clocks mark time until the "sacred event" that will end a century and a half of colonial humiliation. But for most Hong Kong citizens, they might as well be doomsday clocks. In April, tens of thousands of people lined up at the Hong Kong Immigration Office and at a nearby sports field on the eve of the deadline

for residents to apply for British National Overseas passports. That so many would clamor so desperately for an almost useless document—the passports offer visa-free entry to the U.K. but not residency or citizenship—underscores the dread many Hong Kongers feel in the face of China's impending sovereignty.

Many of the territory's residents also feel they have been betrayed. In a 1984 agreement reached with the government of Margaret Thatcher, Beijing promised to preserve Hong Kong's autonomy for 50 years under what then-leader Deng Xiaoping called "one country, two systems." Since then, however, Chinese officials have watered down their pledge to the point where another of Deng's slogans—"50 years, no change"—has become a stock punch line for a series of bad jokes and even a TV ad for cognac.

Chinese officials now vow to scuttle electoral reforms introduced last year by Chris Patten, the current British governor of the colony. The hastily enacted reforms created what was arguably the first all-elected legisla-

ture in Hong Kong history. Under Patten's reforms local residents elected 20 members of the 60-seat Legislative Council (Legco). The remaining seats were chosen either by social or professional groups—which themselves had "elections" with varying degrees of democratic consent—or by district council representatives who acted as a sort of electoral college. China objected to the exercise and this year formally announced plans to dissolve the body in 1997 and replace it indefinitely (pending new elections and appointments under Chinese rules) with an all-appointed provisional legislature.

Moreover, an officially constituted group of Chinese and Hong Kong citizens appointed by Beijing and charged with setting up procedures for the transition to Chinese rule, the so-called Preparatory Committee, is talking of repealing recently passed Hong Kong laws that protect civil and human rights, freedom of the press and access to government information. The committee—which is composed mainly of sycophantic Hong Kong millionaires, pro-China politicians and Chinese government officials—has warned civil servants that they will be required to swear allegiance to the new provisional legislature. Even judges are being privately cautioned by committee members and Chinese officials that they will be expected to express loyalty to the new system in order to stay in office. When the one avowedly pro-democracy member of the 150-member Preparatory Committee cast the sole dissenting vote against dissolving the Legco, he was publicly dressed down by the chairman of the Preparatory Committee, and told he would be considered ineligible to serve in the new provisional legislature. Such "ballots," he was informed, are supposed to be unanimous.

Meanwhile, the local Democratic Party and allied independent democrats won a sweeping majority in the current Legco, but have been reduced to lame ducks, able to do little more than use the doomed assembly as a forum to publicize issues. The Chinese government has promised to repeal any laws it passes that conflict with the "Basic Law" passed by the mainland's National People's Congress. Furthermore, Hong Kong courts will lose jurisdiction over any matters deemed to be "matters of state." Nor will China's future 7,000-member People's Liberation Army garrison come under Hong Kong legal jurisdiction.

A secret internal Chinese government document published recently talks of driving Hong Kong's democratic activists—such as union leader Lee Cheuk-yan, Democratic Party Chairman Martin Lee and independent democratic Legislative Counselor Emily Lau—into exile, a tactic China has increasingly applied against mainland democracy and labor activists. Local journalists, many of them members of the assertively independent Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA), are bracing for intense pressure after the handover. Already, that pressure is being felt. Two years ago, Chinese police in Beijing arrested a reporter for *Ming Pao*, a leading Hong Kong newspaper, and charged him with stealing state secrets. The reporter, Xi Yang, had in fact only obtained and published some data on Chinese gold production and interest rate movements—information, it turns out, which had also been published in the Chinese press.

Hong Kong journalists have interpreted Xi's imprisonment as a warning. Likewise the lifetime sentence handed down later that year to a Chinese official who provided a Hong Kong reporter with an advance transcript of President Jiang Zemin's address to the National People's Congress a day ahead of his talk. HKJA leaders say that Chinese-language reporters and their editors and publishers commonly get calls from officials at the New China News Agency, China's de facto embassy in Hong Kong, cautioning them about stories run under their bylines that displease Chinese authorities. Worse yet, it is becoming increasingly common for Hong Kong reporters working on stories in China—and their Chinese sources—to be harassed and detained by Chinese security people. Occasionally, as in the case of two journalists detained in Fujian province during the recent Chinese military threats to Taiwan, this harassment is made public. Far more often, local publishers handle incidents through personal mainland contacts and quiet diplomacy. Reporters and publishers alike, fearing further harassment or harm to their mainland sources, remain silent, apart from talking privately to fellow journalists.

In one typical case, a Hong Kong reporter and a Chinese source were separately detained by local Public Security Bureau agents, interrogated for several hours and then released. Later, after the reporter had returned to Hong Kong, it was learned that the source had been re-detained, beaten so severely he had to be hospitalized, jailed for a week

and fired from his job. The source asked that nothing be said of the incident, for fear of further repercussions.

The Chinese government has shown similar hostility to Hong Kong's independent labor movement. While many workers are organized by unions affiliated to the pro-China Federation of Trade Unions, some 100,000 belong to the Confederation of Trade Unions (CTU), a member of the International Free Trade Union Federation. With independent labor unions outlawed and persecuted in China, most Hong Kong union leaders fear for the worst after the handover. The CTU has already run afoul of the mainland government because of its support for China's democratic movement. Current confederation leader and Legco member Lee Cheuk-yan, for example, was nabbed by Chinese authorities in Beijing in 1989 as he attempted to deliver HK\$1 million in private donations collected by the unions to support the student movement at Tiananmen. The CTU has also supported exiled Chinese autonomous labor union movement leader Han Dongfang, who is currently stranded in Hong Kong because the Chinese government stripped him of his passport. Ominously, Chinese authorities have already warned that international organizations will not be allowed in Hong Kong—a policy that could be used against the CTU, as part of the international free labor movement, and other groups such as Asia Watch or Amnesty International.

Educational institutions, too, face an uncertain future under the mainland regime. Chinese officials have criticized local schools for ignoring "patriotic education," and so far, school administrators have been only too happy to appease them. Jim Hanerich, the principal of the private Hong Kong International School, stirred controversy in April when he announced that his school would voluntarily alter its curriculum after the handover to steer clear of discussion of Chinese human rights abuses. The head of the much larger, semi-public English Schools Foundation, which runs a number of English-language primary and high schools catering primarily to local Hong Kong Chinese families, endorsed this position. And the Preparatory Committee invited but then barred a pro-democracy teachers union from addressing a public meeting scheduled ostensibly to canvass the views of Hong Kong citizens about handover-related issues. At that abortive hearing, two representatives of the local university students' association, invited at the last minute as substitutes for the barred teachers, denounced the event as a sham and were physically ejected. Student groups complain that of the five chancellors of the territory's universities who are members of the Preparatory Committee, none has defended the students or opposed these attacks on educational or political freedom.

Whether such appeasement will forestall even more authoritarian rule once China takes over remains uncertain. But in the event of a major Chinese crackdown on freedom, Hong Kong could face a huge—and economically disastrous—exodus of its middle class. Nearly one-third of Hong Kong's 6 million residents are believed to either hold

a foreign passport or have a close relative who does. Even Tsang Yok-sin, leader of the pro-China Democratic Association for the Betterment of Hong Kong political party, made sure his wife and family got Canadian passports after the Tiananmen massacre, thus ensuring his own easy exit if things get ugly. For the lower classes, though, there is nowhere to go. Many swam through shark-infested waters to Hong Kong or nearby Portuguese Macao or slipped through the marshes and fences into the New Territories in the years since 1949. They can count on no such luck escaping from Hong Kong, as the usual havens—such as Canada, Australia and the United States—have become more reluctant to admit refugees.

"We don't have any alternatives," says Chan Wai-man, a cabbie who, like many Hong Kongers, fled to Hong Kong during the early 1970s as China was wracked by the Cultural Revolution. "We'll just have to survive as best we can."

In public, international business executives in Hong Kong are quick to dismiss the handover as a "non-event," maintaining that China will want to preserve the territory's economic vitality. Hong Kong, they note, accounts for the majority of foreign investment in China—and foreign investment is the engine that is driving Chinese economic development. In private, however, many concede that they are worried. An executive with one major U.S. money-center bank here says, "I talk with multinational managing directors all the time, and nearly all of them admit that they are either quietly moving back-office operations and assets out of Hong Kong or are not doing any expanding. They're all worried." Few companies operating in Hong Kong are even incorporated in the territory anymore. New firms incorporate in the Cayman Islands or Bermuda, while long-established ones, including the hoary opium pushers-cum-multinational conglomerate Jardine Matheson, have moved their incorporation papers elsewhere. Jardine actually moved its primary stock listings to Singapore, too. Property management firms say that companies are now putting off signing any office leases until they see how the transition turns out.

More recently, several surveys have revealed that most top business managers fear the worst. According to one survey by the Global Group, a U.S.-based consulting firm, 57 percent of executives said they expected Chinese sovereignty to bring more bureaucracy, kidnappings and corruption, and to put an end to a fair legal system.

Many observers fear that military and government officials sent from China to rule Hong Kong will waste no time in plundering the territory's riches. Neighboring Shenzhen, they warn, may presage the grim fate awaiting Hong Kong. Set up by Deng in 1979 as a special economic zone to serve as a model for capitalist development with Chinese characteristics, Shenzhen has become a cesspool of corruption, with People's Armed Police riding around in stolen or smuggled Mercedes 600 limos, running extortion rackets, illegal brothels, begging rings and seagoing pirate fleets. Recently,

the mayor of Shenzhen complained to Beijing authorities that police thugs had brutally beaten his wife after her driver told them to move their vehicle—a clear vindication of Mao's old adage that real power flows from the barrel of a gun. As the mayor, ostensibly a high party official, complained at the time, "If I can't even protect my own wife, how can I be expected to protect my people?"

If the Chinese administration of Hong Kong follows a similar course, residents of the territory can expect little help from foreign quarters. While the United States has expressed some concern about the future of democracy in Hong Kong, such talk is cheap. The Clinton administration, like the Bush administration before it, has repeatedly backed away from confronting China on human rights issues, fearing the loss of access to Chinese markets for U.S. business.

Nor can Britain be expected to help, even with the likely change to a Labor government before the handover date. The British sealed Hong Kong's fate with a major betrayal—the 1984 revocation of British citizenship rights for some 2.5 million Hong Kong residents. And during a recent visit to the colony, Robin Cook, the Labor shadow foreign minister, affirmed his party's unwillingness to reconsider that position. So opposed is the British public to the prospect of Hong Kong immigrants that the current Tory government has even refused to grant citizenship to some 3,000 ethnic Indians who will be left stateless by the handover. Indeed, it took 20 years of protests by British veterans to gain right-of-abode status for a handful of Hong Kong Chinese widows of British veterans who defended Hong Kong against the Japanese during World War II.

It's an attitude reminiscent of the American government's decision after the Vietnam War to let thousands of its former Vietnamese allies and their families languish for years in squalid refugee prison camps in Hong Kong—only to be shipped back to Vietnam. In a piece of gallows humor, some of these Vietnamese "boat people" painted on a camp wall, "People of Hong Kong, Our Present Is Your Future." Few local people laughed, since they expect that the walled and razor-wire-encircled camps, which are to be emptied of Vietnamese this year, will soon be put to new use after China assumes control of Hong Kong. ◀

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WHO ARE THE BEST YOUNG NOVELISTS IN THE USA?

DISCOVER THEIR WORK IN THE SUMMER 1996 ISSUE OF GRANTA

Who are the finest new writers in America? Who is demonstrating outstanding talent and promise? Which young authors are best telling the stories that examine, illuminate and enrich our lives?

Granta decided to find out—not an easy job in a country which publishes around a thousand 'literary' novels and short-story collections every year, some noted and evaluated by book reviews, many others not. Granta wanted to be fair. We cast our nets wide.

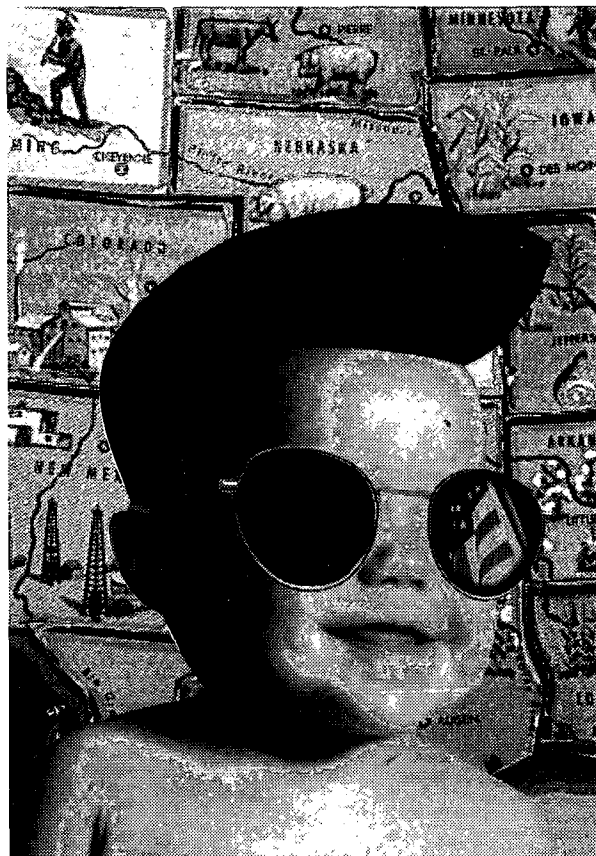
We asked for nominations from large and small publishers, university presses, librarians and book-sellers. Several hundred books by writers under the age of forty were submitted. Fifteen of America's most distinguished writers were enrolled as judges on regional panels, spent five months reading the books and eventually decided on a shortlist of fifty-two regional winners. From this shortlist twenty finalists were chosen by our national judges: Robert Stone, Anne Tyler, Tobias Wolff and Granta's editor, Ian Jack.

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GRANTA

B L A C K A M E R I C A

USA for Africa

H

ard times in Africa may seem like a subject little related to politics here in the United States. But as the continent suffers through disaster after disaster, a number of African-American leaders are demanding that the United States adopt a more responsible policy toward Africa and also toward the United Nations, whose High Commission for Refugees has been crippled by the American refusal to pay its U.N. debts.

The high-profile foreign policy role is one that African-Americans have played before, Djibril Diallo, public affairs director of the U.N. Development Program, pointed out in a recent speech at the University of Illinois' Chicago campus. "We know that you are well-equipped for the job at hand," he said. "Africa recalls with great appreciation the key role played by African-Americans in fighting colonialism

in Africa and in uprooting apartheid."

"In March, we [the U.N.] launched a 10-year, \$25 billion Special Initiative for Africa to provide for a continent in dire need—and we need your help," explained Diallo. He reminded his audience of academics, journalists, elected officials and organizers that many African countries look to African-Americans to exert their influence in shaping U.S. policy toward that troubled continent. "We appeal to you," Diallo intoned. "You must be our voice, our advocate and protectors of our common future."

Such a scene would have been unlikely 25 years ago. Black Americans had so little influence on the crafting of foreign policy, U.N. officials seldom sought their assistance. But, as Diallo noted, things are a bit different in 1996. Americans of African descent increasingly exert influence on U.S. policies in Africa and countries considered part of the African diaspora, such as Haiti. Still, it must be noted, other areas of foreign policy remain as devoid of black input as ever.

And although Diallo correctly pinpointed black Americans' lobbying successes, he could just as easily have noted their failures. Since the Cold War ended, U.S. interest in Africa has flagged considerably despite the continent's crisis of growing population and diminishing resources. According to U.N. figures, Africa accounts for 33 of the world's 50 poorest countries. One-half of all Africans live in poverty and 70 percent of these are women. An AIDS epidemic threatens millions. And several countries are crippled by bloody civil wars.

Despite this grim tableau, sub-Saharan Africa's 45 countries receive less than \$800 million in American aid. In contrast, Israel receives \$3.1 billion. Much of that disproportion is, no doubt, the price of strategic importance; Israel remains a bastion of Western influence in a region with high geopolitical currency. Now that Africa is no longer a major arena for the surrogate battles of Cold War rivals, the continent has scant strategic value. Randall Robinson, president of TransAfrica, a Washington-based advocacy group for Africa and the Caribbean, argues that the legacy of the Cold War accounts for many of Africa's contemporary problems.

"Somalias don't just happen," he says. "We had a lot to do with it. We sent the dictator of a peaceful, pastoral society that had survived 1,000 years \$887 million worth of arms—everything he needed to destroy himself and his people—just because we wanted access to an air base in the Gulf of Aden."

"We didn't care what those leaders in Somalia and other places did to their own people with the resources we provided," Robinson continues. "After the Cold War ended, we simply walked away. So while we cared for 30 years for the wrong reason, it would appear now that we don't care at

*Black leaders
seek to redress
U.S. policy-
makers'
longstanding
neglect of
Africa.*

By Salim Muwakkil

all." Robinson charges that the Clinton administration has virtually abdicated responsibility of any kind toward the region and has implemented policies ranging from "ineffectual to disastrous."

At a time when conditions are steadily improving for many peoples around the world, Africa is the only region where poverty is expected to increase during this decade. These dismal projections helped Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) members like Reps. Ronald Dellums (D-CA) and Major Owens (D-NY) extract promises to craft a more responsive policy from candidate Bill Clinton.

At first, President Clinton's appointment of Anthony Lake, a respected Africa scholar, as national security adviser seemed to confirm the change. But after the Somalian peacekeeping mission that Clinton inherited from George Bush started racking up too many American casualties, the administration began to move away from engagements in Africa. As Carole J.L. Collins pointed out in her June 10 *ITT* piece, "Heart of darkness," it was political fallout from Somalia that slowed the administration's response to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. And when the United States did respond, it mounted but a brief humanitarian airlift for refugees.

When the six-year civil war in Liberia began boiling over earlier this year, Washington's response was again tepid; Marines were sent to protect the U.S. Embassy and to evacuate Americans and other Westerners from the Liberian capital of Monrovia. "And the Clinton administration wouldn't even have gone that far had it not been for prodding by the CBC," argues Mwiza Munthali of TransAfrica Forum, an educational appendage of TransAfrica. "Despite massive scales of human misery and, it must also be said, enormous human potential, the U.S. almost completely ignores Africa. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has yet to visit the continent."

Of course, much of this lack of interest is standard operating procedure. The United States has seldom valued Africa for anything other than its natural resources or its role as a Cold War proxy. Robinson started TransAfrica in 1976 as an attempt to change that relationship. "The idea was simple," he said in a recent interview. "As Greek-Americans care about Greece and Jewish-Americans care about Israel, African-Americans should care about Africa. It's the fountainhead of our people and our destinies are inextricably linked."

Robinson's TransAfrica toils in the mainstream to affect policy change. Although several other groups have called for changes in U.S. policy toward Africa, they are seen as militant organs of black protest and have thus been marginalized. Robinson's talent lies in his ability to merge that radical spirit with less threatening mainstream sensibilities. TransAfrica's crossover success has inspired similar groups and has emboldened the CBC and other black elected offi-

cials to speak more forthrightly for African interests.

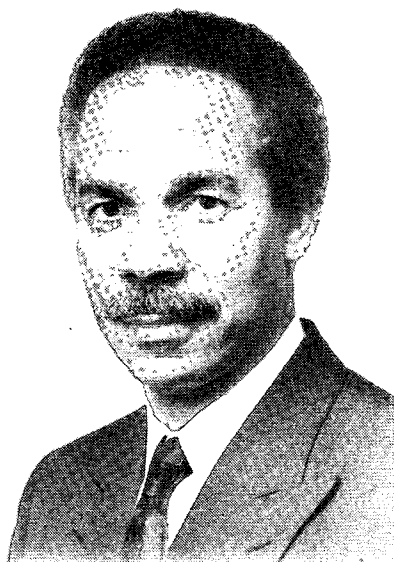
Inevitably, there is disagreement between these groups. While TransAfrica and a coalition of leading black Americans have urged the United States to impose economic sanctions on the repressive Nigerian regime, a group of black clergy, state legislators and newspaper publishers oppose sanctions. "The White House feels it can get black Americans to support them if they punish Nigeria, because the Randall Robinson view prevails in the Clinton administration," says Dorothy Leavell, publisher of the *Chicago Crusader* and president of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), in a March news conference. "We have to convince the administration that they won't lose the black vote if they don't impose economic sanctions." Leavell expects to have an anti-sanctions petition with 100,000 signatures for the White House by late June.

Supporters of sanctions charge that Leavell's group has been paid off by the Nigerian government. Writing in the *Progressive*, Fred McKissack Jr. argues that the NNPA can get away with its disinformation campaign because

many black Americans are uninformed about events in Africa. "The coverage of Nigeria by the NNPA," he writes, "has brought into sharp focus the need for a coherent policy toward Africa by black leaders in this country."

And Nigeria is just one of many complex issues. Internal conflicts in Angola, Algeria, Burundi, Liberia, the KwaZulu/Natal province in South Africa, northern Niger, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and Zaire will tax the knowledge of even the most seasoned Africa hand. But there are also promising trends. Open elections and democratic institutions are on the increase and concern for human rights is more frequently expressed in many formerly repressive African countries. Economic growth rates for Africa in 1996 are projected to be in the 3 percent range, considerably higher than the 1.5 percent average for the early 1990s but still too little given the continent's vast potential.

Black intellectuals' increasing influence on those who craft American foreign policy requires a nuanced knowledge of Africa. The conference at the University of Illinois, Chicago was one of many attempts to school African-Americans in the variety and complexity of the vast continent. "We need to bring Africans and African-Americans together in as many intellectual venues as we can," says conference organizer Edward "Buzz" Palmer. "The challenges are greater but the rewards could also be greater. We just have to do the work."



TransAfrica President
Randall Robinson

L A B O R

Conventional wisdom

After four years of preparation and anticipation, more than 1,600 enthusiastic members of the Labor Party Advocates (LPA) came together in Cleveland, June 6-9, to found a new political party. Initiated by Tony Mazzocchi, a longtime leader of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW), the new Labor Party is the first union-led political party to be formed since the American Labor Party was organized in 1936. The Labor Party is also the first union-led party since the formation of the AFL in 1886 designed to present working people with an alternative vision of the good society.

A new Labor Party is inaugurated, but it doesn't plan to endorse candidates anytime soon.

By James Weinstein
CLEVELAND

While the American Labor Party was formed to bring workers in New York state into the New Deal coalition, this Labor Party aims to provide working people with an independent political vehicle to oppose

the corporate agenda of both major parties.

The Labor Party is thus the first to break with the approach to politics that Samuel Gompers, the AFL's founder and leading ideologue, announced at the turn of the century. Labor, Gompers insisted, would not isolate itself by going it alone or by joining the Socialists. Instead, it would "reward its friends and punish its enemies" within the major parties. But today, most delegates in Cleveland insisted, working people have few friends in either of the two parties. And if anyone at the convention disagreed, it was those who seemed to think they have none at all.

Overall, it was a well-run and carefully managed convention. While just about everyone who wanted to speak got a chance to do so, the allocation of votes heavily favored the nine international unions that endorsed the LPA, especially its main organizers, OCAW and the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (UE). (Other founding internationals were the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, the Interna-

tional Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU), the California Nurses Association, the American Federation of Government Employees, the United Mine Workers, the International Brotherhood of DuPont Workers and the Textile Processors, Service Trades, Health Care, Professional and Technical Employees.) In addition to the internationals, a number of central labor councils and many locals were represented, along with a large number of regional LPA chapters.

These chapters are a crucial part of the scheme for the new party. They provide a way for the majority of working people who don't belong to a union to participate, and chapter members—who come to the party at their own initiative—are likely to be more active in future political campaigns than the average union member. But chapter dele-

Walking their talk

A few days before the Labor Party convention in Cleveland, Mayor Michael White took steps to undermine the city's collective bargaining agreements with its unions. Local unions called a protest demonstration for Friday, June 7, to be held in front of City Hall—just a block away from the convention. Learning of this, the delegates unanimously voted to join in, and at 5:00 p.m., all 1,600 delegates streamed out onto Cleveland's rainy streets to carry out the first of the many actions in which they propose to engage for the next two years. The demonstration got heavy coverage on the evening news and a big story in the next day's newspapers. They also got Mayor White's attention, but so far he has held his ground. —J.W.

gates were also the main dissenters. Many came with a deep distrust of union bureaucracy, and most came determined to start running candidates immediately. A wide variety of Trotskyists enlivened the ranks of the chapter members by clamoring for immediate action, and for going it alone.

The divide between those favoring immediate electoral activity and those imposing restraint became clear as soon as debate started on a foundational resolution entitled "A new organizing approach to politics." It called for the group to spend considerable time organizing before it ventured into the electoral arena. Mandating "common non-electoral political activities throughout the year," it proposed electoral action "only after recruiting and mobilizing workers with sufficient collective resources to take on an electoral system dominated by corporations and the wealthy." Meanwhile, the resolution proposed "actions to force elected officials and candidates to speak to our issues as we define them."

Such pre-electoral activity, the proposal stated, will continue until the next LPA convention, two years from now. Until then, the Labor Party will not "endorse candidates of any kind" or "spend any Labor Party resources on electoral campaigns."

Advocates of immediately fielding candidates argued that politics in this country means running people for public office. As one woman delegate told the convention, "You ain't a party if you don't have candidates."

She was answered by a union man who insisted that you had to build a constituency before running union candidates. "Organize, organize, organize," he said, "Build first, run later."

And he, in turn, was answered by a black woman delegate who insisted that "A labor party is to represent the political interests of working people. To Americans that means in the electoral arena. We need to elect people to the House. We need real representation—not just groups to pressure those now in office."

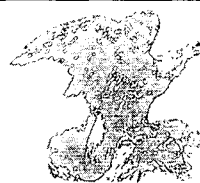
And so it went until the lunch break. When the debate resumed, the ILWU delegation, led by former president David Arian, introduced a proposal to amend and replace the original resolution. The ILWU proposal eliminated the ban on running or endorsing candidates over the next two years and added a section that would allow local chapters and county or state organizations of the Labor Party to support independents. But it banned support or endorsement of "candidates from other political parties."

But the new language only led to a rerun of the morn-

ing's arguments. Finally a delegate from Local 1781 of the Machinists union spoke openly to the issue that had festered beneath the surface of two days of debates. Implicitly acknowledging that this attempt to create a labor party still represented only a small fraction of the movement, he argued that the party needs to organize actions, marches and picket lines to win rank-and-file support in other unions. The non-electoral policy proposed by the leadership, he added, was designed to "avoid a head-on clash with the main body of the labor movement." And that is a necessity, if the Labor Party is to grow into a genuinely meaningful political party.

By the end of the day, a small handful of delegates remained unconvinced, but the overwhelming majority had come to see the logic of the situation. While an independent formation, like the New Party, can attempt to build an electoral movement by running candidates for office at the local level, the Labor Party must find ways to grow without offending or threatening the political strategy of the larger movement of which it is still only a small part. The AFL-CIO is spending \$35 million to elect a Democratic Congress and to re-elect Bill Clinton this year. The last thing it needs—and the last thing it would tolerate—is a rival on the left undermining its efforts. As a non-electoral organization, on the other hand, the Labor Party may strengthen the main movement's hand.

Whether or not the Labor Party can grow and win enough support in two years so that it can then run its own candidates remains an open question. But it has made a good start and positioned itself well to move toward its goal. ◀



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VIEWPOINT

Separate but color-blind

By Jamin Raskin

Last month marked the hundredth anniversary of the Supreme Court's infamous decision in *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, which upheld a Louisiana statute requiring "equal but separate" accommodations for black and white rail passengers. The occasion might have provided Americans an opportunity to refocus on the lost ideal of integration or the dangers posed by the accelerating resegregation of America's schools and neighborhoods. Instead, *Plessy*'s centennial has been hijacked by critics of affirmative action, who liken race-conscious integration today to race-conscious segregation a century ago. Turning the tables on the civil rights movement, today's racial conservatives invoke in their cause the famous dissenting opinion in *Plessy* written by Justice John M. Harlan, a man vilified by the racial conservatives of his time.

Justice Harlan has become trendy because he developed the constitutional metaphor of "color-blindness," a turn of phrase that carries a heavy load today. It supposedly explains what is wrong with affirmative action, majority-black and Hispanic congressional districts, and the other pathologies of the much-reviled age of "diversity." Creating an integrated congressional district like the one in North Carolina targeted in *Shaw vs. Reno*—where blacks comprise 53 percent of the population and whites 47 percent—is now deemed equivalent to legislating Jim Crow on passenger coaches. Both state actions allegedly offend "color-blindness."

A century after Plessy vs. Ferguson, conservatives find a new doctrine.

It is interesting that champions of "color-blindness" on the Supreme Court think of themselves as strict constructionists and originalists, given that the term appears nowhere in the Constitution or in the legislative history of the Fourteenth Amendment. The Reconstruction Congress that decided to add the words "equal protection" to the Constitution passed numerous race-conscious measures, such as the Freedmen's Bureau, to transfer resources to African-Americans. Justice Harlan himself recognized in *Plessy* that the purpose of the Reconstruction amendments was "to secure 'to a race recently emancipated, a race that through many generations have been held in slavery, all the civil rights that the superior race enjoy.'"

The enemies of affirmative action would nonetheless invite us to believe that "color-blindness" is the "essential principle of equality under law," as Clint Bolick put it in his panegyric to Harlan's dissent in the *New York Times* ("Discriminating Liberals," May 6, 1996). But this view misses the fact that what the Constitution opposes is not cognizance of color but racial subjugation and domination. Justice Harlan came closer to getting it right in *Plessy* when he invoked the Thirteenth Amendment's ban on involuntary servitude. He stated: "The arbitrary separation of citizens, on the basis of race, while they are on a public highway, is a badge of servitude wholly inconsistent with the civil freedom and the equality before the law established by the constitution."

If color-blindness exhausts the meanings of equal protection but we have no text or history to define the concept, we must turn to Justice Harlan to understand it. But Harlan's fans are embarrassed by his intellectual honesty. Bolick, for example, edits Harlan's text in a most revealing way. He quotes Harlan's statement that the Constitution does not "permit any public authority to know the race" of citizens. Then he fast-forwards several paragraphs and quotes the passage popularized by Justices Rehnquist and Scalia: "There is no caste here. Our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens."

Bolick has omitted Harlan's essential introduction of color-blindness. Clip and carry with you these sentences that immediately precede the second passage quoted by Bolick:

The white race deems itself to be the dominant race in this country. And so it is, in prestige, in achievements, in education, in

wealth, and in power. So, I doubt not, it will continue to be for all time, if it remains true to its great heritage, and holds fast to the principles of constitutional liberty. But in view of the constitution, in the eye of the law, there is in this country no superior, dominant, ruling class of citizens. There is no caste here. Our Constitution is color-blind.

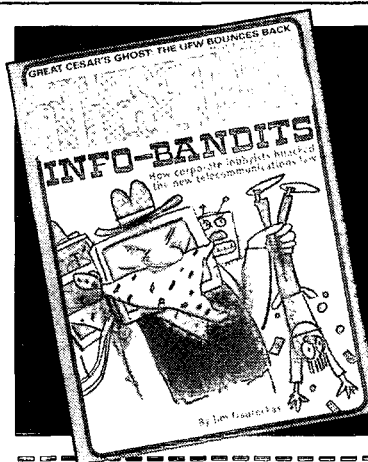
A former slaveowner and Know-Nothing crusader, Justice Harlan saw juridical "color-blindness" as a principle perfectly compatible with—indeed, essential to—the preservation of white racial dominance in America.

Justice Harlan wanted to reassure his colleagues that white dominance in society could survive formal neutrality in law, and of course he was proven right about that. The converse has not turned out to be true: Formal neutrality in law cannot seem to survive the blinding pathologies of white supremacy. Thus we have a "color-blind" Supreme Court striking down oddly shaped majority-black congressional districts while upholding oddly shaped majority-white districts. We have the Court upholding the death penalty in states where defendants whose victims were white have four times the chance of being executed as defendants whose victims were black. We have federal courts striking down special scholarships for minorities but not special scholarships for athletes, bowlers, descendants of Daughters of the American Revolution or children of alumni.

Conservatives have created a joyful union between a legal rhetoric of color-blindness and a social ideology of racialism. Even as they genuflect before the altar of color-blindness, they keep returning to racial superstition like criminals to the scene of a crime. Whether it is Charles Murray and R.J. Herrnstein probing the deep scientific mysteries of racial differences in intelligence, Dinesh D'Souza indulging our appetite for what might be called racial pornography, or Clarence Thomas showing off his race pride by singing the praises of all-black schools, color-blind conservatives prove themselves, time and again, to be race-obsessed.

Conservatives a century ago applauded the majority's "separate but equal" doctrine. Today they celebrate Justice Harlan's opinion. The constant is indifference to racial stratification and resistance to government efforts to mitigate it. However, it is far from clear—as some would like it to be—that Justice Harlan, in our time, would have deployed the principle of color-blindness to strike down efforts to assist, as opposed to oppress, the black population. But even if he would have, that kind of color-blindness is just a legal veneer for the white supremacy he thought was an intractable part of our history. One might forgive him, a white liberal from the last century, for the limitations of his vision. As for his modern-day enthusiasts, one can only see their conversion to color-blindness as too little, too late, and all too convenient.

Jamin Raskin is a professor of constitutional law and associate dean of the Washington College of Law at American University.



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I N T H E A R T S

Montenegro homesick blues

Someone Else's America offers a bittersweet reverie on the inner journey of the immigrant.

By Pat Dowell

Someone Else's America is a movie about the problem of immigration, but not the problem that dogs American political debate in this increasingly uninviting decade. It is a bitter-sweet, gently comic reverie on the inner journey of the immigrant.

That passage is filled with the looming obstacles of the past—the memories that reside not only in the conscious mind but in the very tissues of a body accustomed to a certain touch, a particular surface. An old woman from Montenegro despairs of adapting to her new home in Brooklyn. “I have no stone table and no goat,” she cries to her grandson, a teenager whose alarming entrepreneurial appetite has been awakened by his new neighborhood. “There’s no life for me here. I don’t know how to live here, in

someone else’s country.”

This British-French-German co-production—directed by an exile from Belgrade and starring a first-generation Scot of Italian parentage—is a little tower of babel that produces a tender harmony all its own. Director Goran Paskaljevic, who is himself an immigrant to Paris, has made a movie that leaves politics out of the picture. It is a measure of the meanness of our times, however, that *Someone Else's America* seems audacious just because it unabashedly treats the immigrant as a figure of homely heroism who battles himself, and all that he was, to become a new man. It’s a comedy about the price of cultural capital, and the baggage a family’s three generations bring to a new life.

The story begins and ends with the middle-aged. Alonso (Scottish star Tom Conti) and Bayo (Miki Manojlovic, the star of Emir Kusturica’s controversial 1995 Yugoslav epic *Underground*) are feckless friends who have worked out sputtering arrangements of their own with America. Alonso, a lovelorn bachelor living with his homesick mother, owns a quiet bar in Brooklyn.

Bayo cleans up the place in exchange for a room. But after three years in the United States, Bayo is stuck just below the surface of American society, without a green card or enough cash to provide comfortable passage for his mother and his three children to leave Montenegro.

His little girl pines for him, as the movie cuts back and forth between Bayo’s directionless life in America and the family’s arduous journey to join him, a route that includes an illegal border crossing from Mexico. At the Rio Grande, they lose a child to the river. The tragedy is genuine, without any easily identifiable evildoers; the family’s smuggler, or guide—take your pick—is hardly the coyote of television movie infamy, but rather a forlorn cowboy just as much at the mercy of the rushing water as any of his charges. The victims of this story fall prey more to their own dreams than to the malice of others.

Once Bayo’s mother and children move into Alonso’s Brooklyn compound, the story begins to explore generational differences. Bayo’s son, Luka, is right at home, already a graduate of the rootless global culture with a survivor’s instinct for com-



Someone Else's America
Directed by
Goran Paskaljevic



merce. And Paskaljevic depicts him, like the cowboy, as a man of complex shadings. He falls conveniently in love with a Chinese-American girl and the matrimonial promise of a green card, but he also really seems to like her. Luka grasps literally the possibilities of Alonso's Paradiso Bar, and uses his grandmother's cooking to turn the hangout into a snug restaurant.

Alonso goes along with new circumstances—that is the secret of his survival and of his loneliness. However, Luka's enterprise unearths an intransigence in Bayo, who is still traumatized by his other child's death. It leads to distrust and estrangement from the living.

For a little movie, *Someone Else's America* manages to take the measure of broad emotions, and it has not only Paskaljevic's sensible sentimentality to thank for this but expert performances from both Conti (looking hilariously doughy and buttered) and Manojlovic, a soulful hound of great expressive range.

The movie is nowhere more touching than in its portrait of the old women who have the greatest difficulty in

making new lives. Bayo's mother (who is played by Miki Manojlovic's real-life mother, Zorka) gets the goat that she misses and begins to piece together an illusion of home from its presence. Alonso's blind mother, played by the legendary Spanish actress Maria Casarès (she was sleek, chic Death in Jean Cocteau's surrealist 1949 film *Orpheus*), in that knife-edge voice reeking of a lifetime's smokes, demands to be taken home to her village in Spain.

She is comforted ultimately by the touch of the rough surface of her village well. She cannot see that it is a New World imitation of her old one, a deception hastily crafted by her son and his friend, who fear the frail woman would not survive an actual journey home—to a village that has been razed for a highway. They want her to die happy, even if her homecoming takes place only in her imagination, walled in by a Brooklyn courtyard. It's the sort of breathtakingly sincere and corny gesture that Hollywood often reaches for and rarely achieves, but *Someone Else's America* makes it seem like effortless poetry of the everyday.

IN PRINT

History lessened

By Chris Rasmussen

Americans, according to Mike Wallace, fail to take their nation's history seriously. "The past," he writes, "is not our favorite tense." Indeed, ours is a culture not merely indifferent to history, but downright historicidal, determined to erase unpleasant episodes and to sever the past from the present.

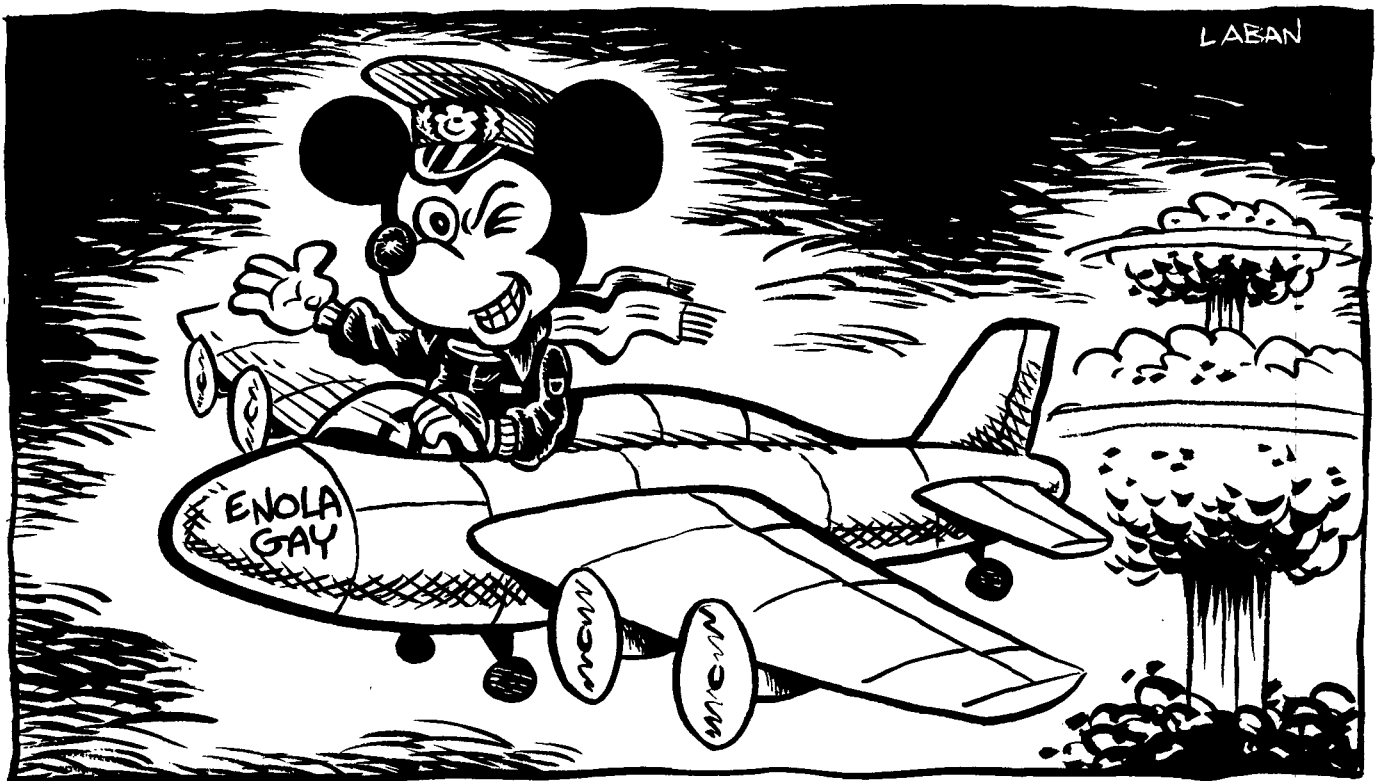
But how are we to reconcile Wallace's statements with the lively controversies that have swirled around prominent depictions of American history in recent years? The

National Museum of American Art's exhibit of *The West As America*, Oliver Stone's film *JFK*, educators' attempts to devise national standards for U.S. history and the Smithsonian's exhibit of the *Enola Gay*—all have occasioned rancorous debate. For a nation that doesn't take its history seriously, the United States has had its share of historical controversies.

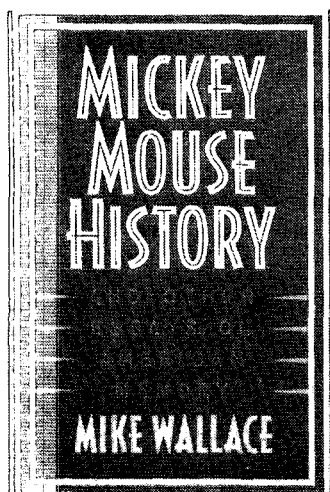
Wallace contends that recent arguments over American history stem from a widespread reluctance to grapple honestly with the past. Recoiling from their nation's record of misdeeds, too many Americans have traded the complexities of history for mythic accounts of their heritage. In these wishful formulations, prosperity, along with liberty, was gradually, ineluctably extended to an ever-growing proportion of the citizenry.

Historians' efforts to challenge this fairy tale—by suggesting that the United States has not been an altogether harmonious society or a nation that has always hewed to its professed principles of liberty and equality—have provoked a powerful response. *Mickey Mouse History*, a collection of articles and addresses on public history, attempts to explain the origins of our culture's peculiar antihistorical bias and how it can be resisted.

Mickey Mouse History is perhaps a misleading title for this anthology. Two of Wallace's 13 essays discuss Disney's saccharine depiction of history in its theme parks, and its ill-fated attempt to build a historical theme park, "Disney's America," within shooting distance of Manassas National Battlefield Park in Virginia. The remainder of the essays range widely over a variety of issues pertain-



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**Mickey Mouse History
and Other Essays on
American Memory**
By Mike Wallace
Temple University Press
318 pp., \$18.95

and other challenges to the American status quo, began to explore previously neglected historical subjects: workers, African-Americans and women, for instance. They also began to criticize some of the dominant groups and institutions in American society. When these efforts to rewrite America's past reached a broader audience outside the academy, they provoked a ferocious backlash from those who resented virtually any criticism of the United States.

Despite the controversy such "new" history may have stirred, professional historians and curators have never managed to capture the popular appeal of uncredentialed historians with an altogether different view of America's past. Two of the most influential historians of our era, it turns out, were Walt Disney and Ronald Reagan—neither of whom wasted a minute in a tedious graduate seminar or set foot in, much less hunkered down in, a moldering archive. They achieved their influence by purveying a nostalgic, irrepressibly cheerful version of American history to tens of millions of citizens. Both the theme-park mogul and the actor-turned-president offered Americans not accurate versions of history, but myths designed to celebrate a supposed common heritage.

Disney's depiction of the past, Wallace writes, is just plain "bad history," which "dulls historical sensibility and invites acquiescence to what is." As president, Reagan sought not only to boost defense spending and redistribute wealth upward, but also "to wage symbolic war on the terrain of history" by attempting to refute—or at least deny—the more critical histories of America being crafted by professional historians.

To combat such historicidal onslaughts, Wallace

ing to the presentation of history, including museumship, historic preservation of old buildings and Ronald Reagan's cavalier disregard for the facts of American history. Collectively, Wallace's engaging, impressively researched and sometimes polemical essays provide a remarkably thorough overview of the development and current state of public history in America, as well as a number of suggestions for fostering Americans' appreciation of history.

Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, both academic historians and museum curators, inspired by the civil rights movement, antiwar protests, feminism

argues, historians and curators must strive to present their subjects in ways that connect the past to the present. History museums, for example, should be "civic galleries" that encourage viewers to think critically about contemporary issues.

Undoubtedly, such exhibits would provide a welcome antidote to the historicidal epidemic that has blighted many Americans' knowledge of their history. But Wallace's insistence that history must invariably be depicted with an eye toward present concerns may itself be insensitive to the integrity of the past. The 18th-century contention over the rights and duties of citizens during the American Revolution, or the postwar debate over whether women should retain their wartime jobs after World War II, are indeed instructive today; but each is also the product of its distinct era. While the past is certainly not unconnected to the present, it is indisputably different. Encouraging museum visitors to stretch their historical imaginations, and to envision people, ideas and eras that are unlike their own, might prove almost as valuable as Wallace's insistence that public history be used to inform contemporary political debates.

Wallace's final essay, on the battle surrounding the National Air and Space Museum's 1995 *Enola Gay* exhibit, demonstrates just how stubbornly complicated both the past and public history can be. Scheduled to coincide with the 50th anniversary of World War II's end, the museum's exhibit about the plane that dropped the first atomic bomb

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VERSO

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on Hiroshima was originally designed to explore important historical and ethical questions about the use of nuclear weapons. Despite the curators' earnest efforts to incorporate the views of World War II veterans, the proposed exhibit ran afoul of some staunch proponents of President Harry Truman's decision to use atomic weapons against Japan. These critics objected that the exhibit's curators had no right to broach questions about whether the use of atomic weapons was necessary, useful or moral—even though these questions were discussed by politicians, military leaders and scientists before Truman decided to use the bomb. Lobbyists for the aircraft industry, members of Congress and conservative newspaper columnists, many of whom had never personally seen plans for the exhibit, soon began to assail its interpretation of the war's end. On the other side, historians, museum workers and people active in the peace movement decried the attack on the curators' freedom of interpretation and expression.

After months of debate and repeated efforts to make the exhibit palatable to all, the museum finally surrendered almost unconditionally to its critics. The Smithsonian mounted an exhibit that deliberately skirted virtually every consequential historical and ethical issue, instead allowing the mute fuselage of the *Enola Gay* to "speak for itself." In countless discussions, curators sought the counsel of diverse interested parties to explore the enormous range of issues and potential interpretations the exhibit might afford. But the exhibit's nuances were lost in the clamor of protest—protest that had little to do with any real historical interest.

Despite the distressing result of the *Enola Gay* exhibit, Wallace concludes his book on a hopeful, if not altogether optimistic, note. Persistent controversies over the past, he reasons, may suggest that Americans do care about their history after all. Although veterans' groups, conservative congressmen and columnists succeeded in imposing their interpretation of World War II on the Smithsonian's exhibit, their efforts galvanized a host of scholars and curators—despite their differing views about the dropping of the atomic bomb—to speak out for "curatorial freedom."

"The Battle of the Enola Gay," as Wallace calls it, was only one skirmish in a much larger culture war being fought over the meaning of past, present and future. Still, one wonders whether adopting this bellicose language fosters the creation of a culture more congenial to history, one capable of encompassing a wide array of historical interpretations. Wars, after all, have proved almost universally inhospitable to free expression, and are usually fought until one side is vanquished. Replacing the culture war with a cultural debate may be an important first step toward replacing our historicidal culture with one in which public history can thrive.

Chris Rasmussen is completing a book on state and county fairs in the Middle West.

SPEED READ

Raised by Wolves

By Jim Goldberg in collaboration with Philip Brookman
Scalo Publishers in association with the Corcoran Gallery of Art/The Addison Gallery of American Art/Zurich Museum of Design
320 pp., \$45

Twelve Dave is in love with Echo. They're teenage runaways whose daily routines include shooting up heroin or speed and turning tricks, mostly without condoms. "Baby, I'd do anything for you," Dave tells Echo in *Raised by Wolves*. "Maybe I should go out with that fat faggot, then murphy him for \$200 and give it all to you." Dave and Echo go steady for a short time, more a pal thing really, and then she moves on to other boys, and he pines.

In a full-page photo, Dave's shirt is pulled up, revealing a huge scar on his emaciated stomach. On the opposite page, a message in his scribble: "My mom was a 15 yr old Junkie slut who I ain't never seen. My old man is a biker from hell/ the fucked up asshole shot me in the gut when I was 12 yrs old/ Aint gone home since or had one."

Raised by Wolves, by Jim Goldberg in collaboration with Philip Brookman, records in text and photography the experiences of urban runaways in Los Angeles and San Francisco. A national tour of the photos originated at the Corcoran Gallery, where Brookman is curator of photography and media arts. It will be exhibited at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art from June 19 to September 11, 1997.

The photography is dominated by stark black-and-whites. The text, an extended question-and-answer dialogue, meshes with the visual images ambiguously. Confusion is a major rhetorical element of *Raised by Wolves*. The shifting juxtaposition of what we know about these kids, and what is puzzling about them, makes the work simultaneously disturbing and enthralling.

The book's most harrowing questions center on Dave. First we wonder whether he's actually dying, as he claims. If so, what is it that plagues his gaunt, needle-pricked body—hepatitis, leukemia, AIDS? How did he get that gruesome scar? That story about his father—the work of a resentful teen imagination? We assume that Goldberg himself couldn't gather all the answers, though in Dave's case, some of them inexorably develop during the course of the author's investigation.

Goldberg's reportage and interviews are heavily steeped in the kids' grueling circumstances—prostitution, drug abuse, homelessness, the threat of AIDS. As he makes clear, the runaways are exploited routinely, on the streets every day and then in the media, which have done more to sensationalize their condition than to come to their aid.

Goldberg's approach maintains a balance between

manipulation and empathy. He has walked the fine line between showing how most of us view these kids as freaks, and becoming a freak-show huckster himself. While he shocks us with the details, we never catch him displaying them for their shock value. Instead, we see the internal logic of the runaways' descent to the streets, and we understand how public remedies have failed to help them.

Goldberg became friends with many of his interviewees, and the notes they exchanged with him add a compelling personal quality to the portraits he creates. Some are brief jottings, others long pleas for salvation. Combined with the photos, they can convey optimism as well as despair. One girl, smelling a rose, eyes lifted hopefully, writes, "I want to get married and have at least four kids with 10 dogs, and live in a mansion with a jungle greenhouse with a pet jaguar."

Our culture teems with stereotypes of young people: skateboarding punks, the overtly sexualized child models of Calvin Klein ads, and rappers, metalheads and other calculated misfits from the music scene. The ironic, recklessly casual look exploited by those who market to young people is adopted by some of the runaways in *Raised by Wolves*. But unlike the kids paid to pose in sexy ads, Goldberg's kids are posturing for free, on a street corner. The implicit point Goldberg communicates is that, for all we know, the teens in those ads—both the characters portrayed and the models being photographed—may well be just as tormented as the runaways in Goldberg's interviews.

In *Raised by Wolves*, punk is less an aesthetic statement than an authentic expression of life on the streets. And where marketing caricatures mimic various forms of rebellion, Goldberg's kids are the real thing. He speaks with Blade and Tank, two lovers. Blade tells her boyfriend: "I can do a fuck of a lot more doses than you, dude." Afterward, Goldberg will buy them cigarettes and hair spray for Tank's mohawk.

Eventually, Blade regales Goldberg with a nihilist tableau, evoking the apparent passing of an earlier punk generation: "I saw Johnny Rotten at The Scream. And afterward, you know, I was like going to see him. I walked into his hotel room and he was in there with two chicks and fuckin' needles everywhere. It was a gnarly scene."

Gnarly, indeed. And like many of the similar scenes of futility that arrest our interest in youth culture, it begs the question—what lies at the end of all those gestures of rebellion? A more confident culture than ours might hold out the promise of maturity, compromises, the eventual anodynes of creeping middle-aged security. But our commercial celebration of the kids' culture, with its suggestion that all this is simply to be outgrown someday, is itself a dead end. The marketing of ever younger kids as ever more reliable authorities on the nihilistic gestures of hipness keeps the culture itself in a calculated, perpetual adolescence. As Goldberg shows, grasping the problems of street kids requires responding to them as something more than figures of pathos or prurience—comprehending something of their real choices, and imagining futures that they often can't. —Jeffrey L. Periah

Continued from page 18

plete breakdown of Israeli-American relations, the main anchor of Israeli foreign and defense policies.

The most likely alternative is a de facto freeze on the situation. Netanyahu could either refuse to continue the final-stage negotiations or sabotage the process by stonewalling and playing for time (as the previous Likud prime minister, Yitzhak Shamir, reportedly explained his own "peacemaking" efforts in the Madrid negotiations in 1991). Within months, of course, such a stratagem would be understood for what it was, and would inspire a similarly violent reaction. No Palestinian leader could agree to a halt in the peace process before their minimal demands—Israeli Army withdrawal from the bulk of the territories and the establishment of a Palestinian state—are met. Nor would the Palestinian public, their hopes raised by years of PLO, Israeli and Western assurances and the start of Israeli withdrawal, take such a rebuff lying down. Once convinced that the new Israeli government will give them nothing, some form of intifada or rebellion would be quickly revived.

The Clinton administration, which has invested heavily in the Middle East peace process, will not take kindly to any Israeli attempt to roll back or freeze the peace process, and will be incensed if Israeli actions lead to renewed Israeli-PLO clashes. The American-educated Netanyahu is well aware of this and may well be hoping for a Republican victory in November (much as Clinton hoped for a Peres victory last month). But most observers in Jerusalem regard such an outcome as unlikely, and Netanyahu needs to plan for four years of coexistence with Clinton. He realizes that Israel's well-being is ultimately linked to the continued existence of the special relationship: A head-on Israeli-American collision is the last thing he wants. (Netanyahu probably has a period of grace until mid-November, after the American elections. Thereafter, he will face growing American and Arab pressures.)

But the third alternative—progress in the peace negotiations between the Netanyahu government and the Palestinians—seems just as problematic and unlikely as the first two options. Netanyahu's fellow Likud leaders Eitan and Sharon

and his allies in the NRP cannot be expected to agree to the gradual consolidation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza or to further IDF withdrawals from the territories, let alone to any redivision of Jerusalem. If pressed on this point, the NRP would undoubtedly quit the Cabinet, bringing down the government. Though directly elected as prime minister, Netanyahu, according to the new law, must maintain at least a 61-seat parliamentary majority. Otherwise, his government can be toppled by a no-confidence vote, and he would be forced to call new elections.

The same type of considerations apply to the Israeli-Syrian track. Netanyahu's pragmatic image may be justified, but he's unlikely to find a credible way of squaring this circle. After all, he campaigned on a platform of peace with Syria without handing back the Golan Heights: "Peace for peace," not "land for peace." True, months before the elections he hinted at the possibility of a "territorial compromise"—albeit one that would leave Israel in control of much or most of the Golan escarpment. And he may even prove able to get his Cabinet to agree to offer the Syrians such a compromise. But the Syrians are unlikely to accept anything less than the whole of the Golan in exchange for peace—the Rabin-Peres government offered them virtually the whole of the Golan and still Damascus stonewalled, balking at the idea of "normalizing relations" with the Jewish state or instituting credible security arrangements in exchange for a full withdrawal.

Even if he desired compromise, Netanyahu would most certainly encounter staunch opposition within the Likud and from various coalition partners were he to move toward peace. But if his government cleaves to a hard-line stance, severe Israeli-American tension, if not an overt diplomatic rupture, would result. In such an event, Israel could also expect a continuing and intensified Syrian-backed Hezbollah war along the Israeli-Lebanese border and perhaps even some Syrian pinpricks on the Golan itself.

Officials in Washington (and many Israelis) hope that Netanyahu will live up to his image as a non-ideological, hardheaded, pragmatic opportunist; that he will demonstrate flexibility on both the Palestinian and Syrian negotiating tracks; and that he will prove able, by playing one partner against the other, to force more flexible positions on his coalition. But pessimists fear that Netanyahu will be unwilling or unable to produce such conciliatory positions, and that the Israeli-Arab peace process is headed for four years of paralysis, punctuated with severe bouts of violence inside the territories and along Israel's borders. In such circumstances, Israeli-American relations are bound to suffer heavily. Perhaps the best for which we can realistically hope is that a few years of Netanyahu rule will persuade Israelis once and for all of the need for peace. ◀

Benny Morris is a historian and author of *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), and *Israel's Border Wars, 1949-1956* (Oxford University Press, 1993).

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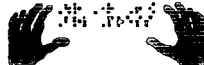
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Continued from page 40

as a general principle, but *foodlife* seems to have the German meaning of the word in mind: be a child. *foodlife*'s "kindness" is a peculiar cross of environmentalism and New Age raised-consciousness claptrap, brought together to form a strange testimonial to consumer passivity. Diners sit among peaceful concrete trees and plastic leaves, listening to soothing worldbeat music; renderings of globes appear throughout the restaurant, as do references to *foodlife*'s massive recycling program and the healthiness of the victuals. Even the paper napkins are conspicuously brown, so one knows they're recycled. And everywhere are the slogans, so pretentious and irritating it's hard to look up from your plate: "simplicity, patience, compassion"; "stay balanced"; "laugh at yourself"; "everything you need for a happy life is within yourself"; "everyone is unique"; "eat green"; "do you know where you are on your journey?" The world may be in crisis, but for Water Tower Place's progressives all that's required is the kind of soul-searching they write lite-rock ballads about. As the caption of one photograph declares, "I have learned to be content in whatever state I am in." Words we fervently hope other people will live by as well—especially those in states with anti-union laws.

◦ eat true: *foodlife* is an upscale food court in an upscale mall populated by distinctly upscale shoppers. Its patrons hail almost exclusively from one social class—the one on top. But everywhere one looks at *foodlife*, one encounters images of another social class—the one on the very, very bottom. Peasants are all over the place, on every table, printed on every cup. They are wise peasants, too, docile adherents to the *foodlife* credo, engaged in backbreaking labor but still in harmony with the primal rhythms of the Earth. Could it be that pictures of peasants are so prevalent at *foodlife* because Foodlifers, much as their aristocratic forebears, like to keep an eye on the rabble while they consume their expensive treats? Partially. But the real appeal of the peasantry is its symbolic embodiment of that most cherished object of consumer desire—authenticity. Peasants "eat true," or at least they did once. Today, of course, only the wealthy can afford peasant food; it has become the province of gourmet grocery stores like Whole Foods and Treasure Island, while real peasants, who earn even less than the wage-slaves toiling in *foodlife*'s kitchens, eat white bread and Twinkies.

◦ it's now: Obviously it is "now," but according to *foodlife* it's *always* been now; there simply is no past—and no future either ("the future is not tomorrow ... it's now" reads one slogan). Like American consumerism generally, *foodlife* offers a glimpse of life cut loose from the surly bonds of time and place, with all cultures and all civilizations turned into products as accessible as a scoop of mashed potatoes plopped onto a plastic plate, or the mellow noodlings of Sting coming over the PA system. Naturally this is presented as a great liberation: "you can't change the past ... but you can LET IT GO," asserts one of

the few slogans to use capital letters. And just next door is a case in point: the Mity Nice Grill, a 1940s-themed restaurant that wanders as blithely and bemusedly through history as *foodlife* does through the cultures of the world.

None of *foodlife*'s pseudo-left cheerleading, of course, is very convincing for very long. Despite the racks of environmentalist literature that help to make up its authenticity decor, one doubts that this has been the site of very many conversions to the Sacred Cause of Reform. The real genius of *foodlife* is the curious role it plays in Water Tower Place as a whole: Here, in a veritable citadel of American consumerism, just down the escalator from a sleek Eurotoy emporium and a bath-products boutique, one finds a nonstop gastronomical celebration of just those qualities that consumerism has trampled into the dirt of every nation on Earth.

Lettuce Entertain You Inc., the national restaurant chain that owns *foodlife*, has built its empire on the idea of the concept eatery and has made a fortune from the understanding that the dining experience is as much about fantasy as it is about food. When you walk into one of their restaurants, you insert yourself into a scene, whether it's the masscult '50s of Ed Debevic's (which the company opened but no longer operates) or the crumbling postwar Italy of Scoozi. But the *foodlife* fantasy is of a different order of magnitude, more ideology than concept. It's a fantasy that not only erases but reverses the economic realities upon which Water Tower Place is built. Here you can set down your bags of shoes and sweaters and cunning electronic toys without a twinge of guilt about the Third World sweatshops where they were made; you can enjoy a cappuccino and a wholesome multigrain muffin and commune with the immigrants in the kitchen and the peasants who picked the coffee beans. After a full day of immersion in the consumerist dream, *foodlife* reassures you that it's all OK, that you are in fact helping the environment by eating off unbleached paper napkins, that you are celebrating human diversity by enjoying a Mex-Thai crepe. Even the relationship between customer and restaurateur is obscured by *foodlife*'s payment scheme, which banishes the exchange of money to a cashier's booth safely distant from the dining room. When you enter the restaurant you're given a plastic card upon which the various food-station attendants tally your debt. Until you're ready to leave the restaurant's fantasy world for the reality outside, even the food is free.

All here is green, multicultural harmony, a seamless hypnotic homage to the virtue of the elite, a soothing declaration by the people at the top of the economic food chain that all's right with the world. It's a fantasy that will doubtless become increasingly popular as the rich get richer and the poor get angrier. You could sum it up in lowercase letters on a banner made from recycled cotton: enjoy yourself. don't worry. capitalism has no consequences.

Tom Frank is editor-in-chief of *The Baffler*, a Chicago-based critical journal. A version of this article ran originally in the *Chicago Reader*.

I N T H E E N D



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Real peons don't eat quiche

By Tom Frank

The patrons of *foodlife*, the popular multiethnic buffet restaurant in Chicago's tony Water Tower Place, have no need for the hierarchy implied by capital letters. They are a distinctive bunch, to be sure, but they are also down-to-earth and democratic, and in their world no one stands higher than anyone else. It's not just the restaurant's logo that tells this tale, it's also the profusion of virtuous slogans hanging everywhere you look. Foodlifers are stewards of the planet, feelers of fine, caring emotions, sympathizers with the downtrodden, enemies of racism, and recyclers of every imaginable little thing. And though the weather in Chicago has warmed considerably since I first began eating amongst them back in January, they show no signs of shedding their fur coats or losing the telltale orange of their tanning-salon complexions.

As all of Chicago's most enthusiastic shoppers know, *foodlife* is a glorified version of the familiar shopping-mall food court, scaled up in price and pretense to match the affluent surroundings of Water Tower Place. It offers all the usual food-court fare—hamburgers, pizza, burritos, stir-fry, pasta—at predictably inflated prices that no doubt put it

safely outside the budgets of the mall's various employees. I personally have sampled the mysterious rice 'n' meat "wraps," and the chicken burrito; others of my acquaintance have grazed at the multigrain, stir-fry and puffy pizza bars. To dispense with the subjective part quickly: However varied and attractive its appearance, the food at *foodlife* is consistently lifeless and bland.

What makes *foodlife* interesting is not the food but the life—more precisely, the vision of life that the restaurant's designers have carefully assembled and about which they want you to make absolutely no mistake. *foodlife* is a full-blown ideological restaurant, a veritable bombastatorium, decorated with uplifting slogans and inspiring images redolent of Maoist China, a consummate statement of the world according to the American upper middle class, circa 1996. The restaurant even has an official "credo"—not some tired tribute to the blue-plate special, but a living manifesto for our times, printed everywhere in humble lowercase, of course: "be kind; eat true; it's now."

• be kind: Surely there's nothing wrong with being kind

Continued on page 39